

AFTER THE DELUGE

A Study of
Communal Psychology
Volume I

LEONARD WOOLF

This is the first volume of a work which is intended to be a detailed survey of the whole of contemporary political and social psychology. It is an attempt to investigate the relation between our individual and communal beliefs and desires on the one hand and contemporary events and civilization on the other. This volume is mainly concerned with democracy and democratic psychology in general as they developed in the eighteenth century and the American and French Revolutions.

A philosophy of history that is not only illuminating and important; it is one that is constantly made refreshing by Mr. Woolf's perception of the men involved and their motives.'

The Manchester Guardian

218.

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AFTER THE DELUGE
A STUDY OF COMMUNAL PSYCHOLOGY

VOL. I

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AFTER THE DELUGE

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LEONARD WOOLF

VOL. I

Ceux qui ne sont pas contents de l'ordre des choses
ne sauraient se vanter d'aimer Dieu comme il faut.
Il faut toujours estre content de l'ordre du passé,
parce qu'il est conforme à la volonté de Dieu
absolue, qu'on connoît par l'événement. Il faut
tacher de rendre l'avenir, autant qu'il dépend de
nous, conforme à la volonté de Dieu présomptive.

LEIBNITZ



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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

THIS work is an attempt to study communal psychology, by which I mean the psychology of man as a social animal. Its plan, if it is ever completed, will require a good many volumes. In this first volume I have not yet finished the study of the communal psychology of democracy, but I have decided to publish it as it stands, partly because it ends at a point of real transition in the enquiry, and partly for the not very good reason that it has already taken a good many years for me to reach even that point.

I have to thank Mr. G. Lowes Dickinson for having read the book in MS. and for much valuable criticism.

L. W.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE	v

PART I. PRELIMINARY

CHAPTER I

THE DELUGE

The war of 1914 to 1918 a catastrophe and landmark in history	19
Comparison of war with other catastrophes and landmarks. Causes of the war psychological	24
Communal psychology as the cause of great historical events	28
Complexity of communal ideas	29
The dead hand in history. Communal ideas are largely the ideas of the dead and are themselves often dead	32
An analysis of communal ideas necessary if we are to understand an event like the war	40

CHAPTER II

PAST AND FUTURE

The nature of history. The difficulty of definition	44
History, as defined in this book, is the record of the past of human beings living in communities. Distinguished from biography and the chronicle	46
Two theories or hypotheses introduced by the historian, that of progress and regression and that of cause and effect. The idea of civilization	51

AFTER THE DELUGE

	PAGE
Civilization a mould or matrix in which at any particular time or place a human community imposes upon the individual a particular imprint. Communal psychology	52
Assumptions of historian: (1) that history is dynamic, (2) that movement is result of cause and effect. Interaction between structure of society and communal psychology. The Reformation as an example	55
Recapitulation of argument	60
Further task of the historian: he should have an eye on the future as well as on the past. A scientific investigator of progress and regression in human communities	62
Should the world be governed by historians?	63
Scale of time against which the historian measures events must vary	67
Summary of what the historian would have to do in order to be able to "place" an event like the war of 1914 in the history of the human race	69

PART II. COMMUNAL PSYCHOLOGY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

SECTION I

POLITICAL COMMUNAL PSYCHOLOGY

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

Political ideas for which millions of persons involved in the war of 1914 believed that they were fighting: freedom, nationality, and democracy	75
The same ideas for which people were fighting in 1789	78

CONTENTS

	PAGE
The historian must therefore start by comparing the communal psychology of the French Revolution with that of the beginning of the twentieth century	79
Relation between political and economic ideas. Political ideas isolated for investigation in this part of book	80

CHAPTER II

1789

Contrast between political structure of Europe in 1780 and 1900. Significance of monarchies in 1780; disappearance or weakening of monarchy in 1900. Power of eighteenth century monarch the result of privilege and privilege the result of inheritance	82
Position of aristocracy in 1780 and 1900. Powers and privileges of eighteenth century aristocracy part of an all-pervading system of inheritance. Political power an inherited privilege or property. Political matrix of 1789 determined by the dead hand in history	88
In Britain classes below aristocracy in 1780 without share in political power. Effect of economic changes. Inheritance of political power tempered first by corruption, secondly by riot. Examples: buying of seats in House of Commons by industrialists, nabobs, etc., and the Gordon Riots. Resistance to change in upper classes. Something new in communal psychology of lower classes	93
Difference in political communal psychology of 1789 and 1914 shown in difference of attitude towards idea of inherited political power	107
Summary of argument	111
Reasons why ideas of liberty, equality, and democracy are not found in political matrix before	

AFTER THE DEBÜGE,

	PAGE
1789 in England. Englishman in eighteenth century not a political animal. Further, democracy is not the antithesis of eighteenth century political system, but a growth from its destruction	112
Comparison with political matrix of eighteenth century France. Political power inheritable property of the king. Disharmony between political framework and economic development greater in France than in England	116
Absolutism and political incompetence of French monarchy lead to the French Revolution	118
Effect of political thought, encouraged by the <i>philosophes</i> , upon French communal psychology	130
Popular discontent. The funerals of Louis XIV., Louis XV., and Louis XVI.	131
Popular discontent shown in the contrast between the communal psychology of Barbier and that of Pepys	134
The relation of this discontent to such political ideas as those of liberty and democracy	141
Summary of argument	144

CHAPTER III

DEMOCRACY

INTRODUCTORY	161-174
Three dominating political ideas in the nineteenth century: democracy, nationalism, and imperialism. In this chapter the idea of democracy will be isolated for analysis	161
Bird's-eye view of the history of democracy in nineteenth century shows that it has been the history of a struggle for political power. Democracy said to have triumphed and yet to be in deadly peril during the war. Attitude of the world towards democracy has changed. Its opponents	

CONTENTS

PAGE

have ceased to fear it and its adherents have lost their enthusiasm for it. In order to investigate these facts, it is necessary (1) to examine democracy as a political idea, (2) to determine the extent to which that idea has actually been applied, and (3) to trace its connection with the war	165
---	-----

THE DEMOCRACY OF THE EARLY DEMOCRATS 174-187

The early democrats stated their idea of democracy clearly in the American Declaration of Independence and in the Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme. The fact that they gave their reasons for their political beliefs was itself revolutionary and a fundamental difference in psychology of democracy	174
---	-----

Relation between the two declarations. Origins of American democracy. The American Declaration concerned only with political democracy, the French Declaration concerned both with political democracy and with civil liberty	178
---	-----

The early democrats in these Declarations start from three metaphysical postulates with regard to happiness, equality, and liberty. These three postulates must be examined separately	187
--	-----

DEMOCRACY AND HAPPINESS 187-242

Idea that all classes and persons had an equal right to happiness revolutionary	187
---	-----

Before the eighteenth century idea that particular kinds of happiness were appropriate to particular persons and classes was practically universal.	
---	--

Miss Hannah More as an example of the old communal psychology	191
---	-----

Instinct of democrats sound in making the doctrine with regard to equal right to the pursuit of happiness the foundation of democracy	195
---	-----

The effects of the belief in the doctrine a good example of the interaction between communal psychology and the structure of society	196
--	-----

AFTER THE DELUGE,

	PAGE
The origins of the new belief with regard to happiness. Attitude of previous ages to human misery. New attitude implicit in Montesquieu and Swift, explicit in Voltaire and Rousseau. Humanitarianism of Voltaire and Rousseau sprang from the same new attitude towards happiness which also produced the democratic doctrine with regard to happiness	198
Utilitarianism also sprang from the same new attitude towards happiness	202
So did socialism. Connection between democracy and socialism	204
Connection between the Social Contract theory and democratic doctrine with regard to happiness	213
Relation between the religious view with regard to happiness and the democratic view with regard to happiness. Christianity stresses unimportance of earthly happiness, democracy its importance. Acquiescence of people before eighteenth century in human misery. The religious doctrine of sin inconsistent with democratic psychology. Effect of doctrine of sin on Hobbes. Effect of absence of sense of sin in politics of the Athenians. Democratization of happiness in recent years accompanied by a decline in religious belief	216
Summary of argument. Democratic beliefs with regard to happiness part of a wide change in attitude towards happiness in communal psychology. Communal psychology does not consist of a chain of logical arguments, but of a network of beliefs and mental attitudes. Democratic beliefs with regard to happiness included in a network of beliefs with regard to equality and liberty	239
DEMOCRACY AND EQUALITY	242-272

Idea of social or political equality closely connected with the consciousness of individuality. Psychological revolution in the seventeenth

CONTENTS

	PAGE
century which led to a new consciousness of individuality. The effects upon literature . . .	242
The effects upon society. Before the change in psychology persons were regarded as members of groups and classes, not as individuals. A communal psychology in which people are regarded primarily as members of classes always accompanied by a system of privilege. Privilege always implies and produces social inequality . . .	248
The democratic doctrine with regard to equality sprang from the view that every one ought to be treated politically and socially as an individual. Everyone should be treated, not as the member of a class, but as a political unit, <i>i.e.</i> , politically he should count as one . . .	252
Connection between this doctrine of equality and the democratic doctrine with regard to happiness .	253
Connection between the doctrine of equality and the doctrine with regard to "natural rights" .	255
The essential nature of democratic equality. The democrat merely holds that society should be organized in such a way that everyone is treated as a social or political unit, <i>i.e.</i> as of equal social and political value. False arguments used by those who defend and attack democratic equality. The difference between non-democratic and democratic civilization . . .	258
Apparent effect of democracy, which was to treat people as individuals, has been to standardize people and their lives, and so destroy individuality. Danger to liberty in the uniformity and standardization accompanying modern life .	268
DEMOCRACY AND LIBERTY . . .	272-335
Idea of liberty in early democratic psychology closely connected with ideas of happiness and equality. Also closely connected with the new sense of individuality. Liberty is regarded as the right or power to shape one's own life without	

AFTER THE DELUGE

	PAGE
interference from other people in accordance with the dictates of one's own personality	272
Difficulty of putting this principle into practice. Early democrats thought the problem simple, <i>i.e.</i> that all they had to do was to abolish privileges. The two conceptions of political liberty and civil liberties	275
The two conceptions spring from two different strands of thought. The early democrats did not see that political democracy is not necessarily accompanied by civil liberty. A community in which everyone is treated as an equal political unit may prove an enemy to individual liberty	279
Example in the attitude of Matthew Arnold to democracy. He approved of equality, but was opposed to liberty. His belief in authoritarianism	281
The relation between authority and liberty in democratic psychology. Authoritarian view of the State inconsistent with democracy	287
Development of anti-democratic psychology since Matthew Arnold's day into a general attitude which may be called neo-authoritarianism. Neo-authoritarianism is a reaction against democracy and is distinguished by a religion and worship of authority. Its characteristics, observable in patriotism, nationalism, imperialism, socialism, communism, and fascism. It is part of a network of interrelated ideas	290
Neo-authoritarianism in political psychology of British and American patriotism. Inconsistent with democracy as shown by the war and the general strike. Analysis of the psychology of the strike. The relation between economic liberty and democratic liberty	295
Analysis of psychology of nationalism and imperialism as examples of neo-authoritarianism	320

CONTENTS

	PAGE
SUMMARY OF ARGUMENT	335-340
• Democracy started as an ideal. The early democrats had no doubts as to how that ideal—government for the common benefit of free and equal citizens—could be attained. Statement of methods for establishment of democracy in the Declarations. Once the programme was stated, the struggle became concentrated upon it and democracy became confused with the means proposed by democrats for attaining democracy. This brings us to the history of democracy in the nineteenth century, which will be examined in detail in the next volume	335
INDEX OF PERSONS	341
INDEX OF SUBJECTS	345

CHAPTER I

THE DELUGE

IN August 1914 something happened in the world. This happening lasted for only four years, though the ripple of its events still continues over the world's surface. We can already look back and see quite clearly the immediate and broad imprint of history upon the years 1914 to 1922. Millions of men, most of them young, suddenly began to try to kill one another. In this they succeeded: many millions were killed outright, and often death came to them only after hours or days of long and intense pain. Many more millions endured the pain and suffering of wounds, and of these unknown, but very large, numbers were crippled or maimed for life. Those engaged in the immediate work of trying to kill or wound one another had to give up their old and normal occupations, and to the vast majority this new occupation was distasteful, for even when it did not bring death or wounds, it entailed great tediousness, discomfort, and suffering. Those immediately engaged in the operation of attempting to kill were called combatants, and the operations of the combatants necessitated the accidental killing of many non-combatants, including women and children. All civilized nations kept a register of the number of combatants killed during the years 1914 to 1918, but none of them kept records of the non-combatants,

PRELIMINARY

tion and semi-starvation, which are now afflicting many millions of the earth's inhabitants.

It is necessary, but perhaps unusual, thus to begin a description of the events of the years 1914 to 1922 in terms of human physical misery and of material destruction. It is true that pain and suffering are such common incidents of human life that they have always formed the excuse for religious beliefs and the premises for philosophical systems. But during the nineteenth century what is called modern or western civilization undoubtedly altered the nature or volume of human suffering. It reduced or localized in time or space certain forms of mass misery. Civilized people had at the beginning of the twentieth century almost come to believe that it was neither necessary nor probable that they should in great masses slaughter one another or die of plague and pestilence or starve to death. A certain amount of disease, a certain amount of poverty, a certain amount of mass misery in some classes of the population, were regarded as inevitable concomitants of civilization and a healthy national life, but normally public opinion demanded and ensured that misery and violent death should be confined within certain limits. From 1914 to 1918 these limits were completely abolished, and, since in Europe, which was the centre of the combatants' operations, the population was far greater than at any previous stage in the world's history, the sum of concentrated human misery was during those years probably greater than human beings had ever experienced before.

History seems to show that mass misery, if it exceeds a certain duration in time or intensity of suffering, has an effect upon men's minds. If life be sufficiently intolerable, an individual will begin to think of methods of escaping from his sufferings or of

THE DELUGE

altering the conditions which cause them. What applies to individuals also applies to men in masses. When whole communities which have been living in apparent security and prosperity suddenly find themselves threatened by death and famine and every kind of communal discomfort and misery, they begin to think of the communal causes of their suffering. But, whether in individuals or in communities, nothing is so unusual or so dangerous as thought. Thought leads to action and action to change, and once things begin to change with thought as the impulse, a movement is started the end of which can neither be controlled nor foreseen. The thought of men, when under the impulse of mass misery it seeks to find and destroy the communal causes of this misery, issues in social and political action. The years 1914 to 1922 furnish a good example of this law of communal psychology. Death and pain on a gigantic scale, starvation and disease, the monotonous discomfort and weariness of millions of combatants, bombs dropping at night upon great cities and the gradual disappearance of sugar, butter, and jam, all these things after two or three or four years quickened men's thoughts and issued in great political and social changes. In the Europe of 1922 little remains of the Europe of 1914. In Russia, Germany, and Austria-Hungary three great autocratic dynasties were overthrown by revolution. The Romanovs had been powerful in Europe for 300 years, the Hohenzollerns for 270 years, and the Hapsburgs for 600 years. In 1922 the last Romanov was dead, the last Hapsburg interned in Madeira, and the last Hohenzollern an exile in Holland. In Russia, where the mass misery had been more intense than anywhere else in Europe, a deliberate attempt had been made to destroy completely the old political and social

PRELIMINARY

ordinary civilized life suddenly began to disappear. Barbarian tribes began to break through into the Roman Empire from the Rhine and Danube frontiers. It was as though millions of Kurds, Bedouins, and African negroes were to burst irresistibly into Germany, Italy, and France. The inhabitants of Rome and the other towns and villages of the Empire found that gradually the solid background of life which they had always taken for granted was disappearing. The process was not a sudden overwhelming catastrophe, but the slow submersion of an old civilization. Barbarian tribes, Franks, Germans, Vandals, Goths, surged in successive waves up and down Europe. Everything which seemed stable and secure, everything which we now mean by "law and order", vanished; the bonds which had united province to province, city to city, and individual to individual were broken, and European society degenerated into a chaotic mass of men and women perpetually swept by war and brigandage, famine and plague.¹

The third century was the beginning of a great historical catastrophe, a landmark in history. Years, centuries of considerable human suffering followed; and under the stimulus of being killed, or wounded, of famishing, and of dying of plague, men began to think, slowly, laboriously, unconsciously. The Greek world and the Roman world, the background of Greek and Roman life and thought, were destroyed as the tribes fought and pillaged up and down Europe; it was a destruction not only of thought, but of all kinds of rational and irrational beliefs which are built up in the minds of masses of men and so

¹ I am not concerned here with any judgment as to the value of the civilization of the Roman Empire, but only with the fact that it was a civilization based upon law and order, and giving to the inhabitants of the Empire a background of life that seemed to be stable and civilized.

THE DELUGE

build up outside them political institutions and society. Thus side by side with the killing of men, the wasting of harvests, ruin of cities, crumbling of political and military power, there was this psychological destruction. But finally, when men had suffered enough, they began to think new thoughts, to get new beliefs, all of which centred in a desire, unconscious often, of ending the intolerable anarchy and misery in which they lived. These new beliefs and desires crystallized in a new society, with its new kings, emperors, popes, frontiers, nations, churches, art, literature, and amusements.

The catastrophe which began in the third century was different in one respect from that which overwhelmed the primitive inhabitants of the Mediterranean valley. There the causes of destruction were purely material, external to men and outside their control. The Roman Empire was, however, destroyed, not by an act of God, but by acts of men. Nevertheless if one considers these three catastrophes, the Mediterranean, the Roman, and that of 1914 to 1918, one sees that the second resembles the first rather than the third. The causes of the second catastrophe, like that of the first, were not psychological; they were not in men's minds. They were indeed human waves which broke over the Rhine and Danube frontiers and slowly submerged the valley of Roman civilization. But there was no thought, no belief, hardly a desire, behind this human flood; it was one of those immense and confused migrations in which the movement of men is always caused by some other migration in the rear. The destroyers were blind, and the destroyed were helpless. But that is not the case with the catastrophe of 1914; it began in men's minds. Its causes are not to be found in the floor of the Atlantic or in the blind ebb and flow of

nomad tribes, but in the aims and policies and passions and beliefs of nations and governments. We say of the war: "The Germans were the cause of it, because they aimed at world dominion"; or "The Entente caused it, because they aimed at the encirclement of Germany"; or "The European system and imperialism and the policy of the balance of power caused it, because the Great Powers competed against one another for empire and power and places in the sun by means of force and hostile alliances"; or "Capitalism caused it because international, like national, society was based upon competition for economic profit, upon the will to exploit". "Aims" set the armies fighting, and it was "war aims" which kept them fighting. We said: "We are fighting for the moral forces of humanity. We are fighting for the respect for public law and for the right of public justice, which are the foundations of civilization";¹ or "The world must be made safe for democracy. . . . We have no selfish ends to serve. We desire no conquest, no dominion. We seek no indemnities for ourselves, no material compensation for the sacrifices we shall freely make. We are but one of the champions of the rights of mankind. We shall be satisfied when those rights have been made as secure as the faith and the freedom of nations can make them";² or "We must and will fight to a successful end our defensive war for right and freedom";³ or "We are fighting for the right of self-determination".

The causes of this catastrophe existed in the minds of those who suffered it. The war would never have begun had not certain human beings thought certain thoughts, desired certain ends, and willed certain acts. It might have been ended at any time during

¹ Mr. Asquith.

² President Wilson.

³ Herr Bethmann-Hollweg.

those four years of painful and sordid glory, by a change in human thoughts, desires, or wills. The war did, indeed, stop suddenly in Russia and all along the frontier the great armies dissolved and disappeared, when Russians decided that they would no longer die for the Tsar and Constantinople, and that the most important things in the world were not the Tsar, Grand Dukes, the crushing of Prussian militarism, and victories over Germans, Austrians, and Turks, but food, land, self-determination, liberty, democracy, and peace. The same thing would have taken place elsewhere, at any moment, if the Germans had decided that they did not want to die for the Kaiser or world dominion, or Belgium, or Poland, or Alsace and Lorraine, or if Britons and Frenchmen had decided to sheathe the sword although the Prussian eagles were still in Brussels or that it was not worth while to make the world safe for democracy.

As an event in human history, the war was caused by human psychology. If we are asked the question "By whose psychology?" the answer may be extremely difficult and complex. We say: "Germany aimed at world dominion", or "France aimed at the recovery of Alsace and Lorraine and fought for the rights of small nations", or "Britain aimed at establishing respect for public law", or "America fought to make the world safe for democracy", or "The Poles and Czechs aimed at the right of self-determination", or "The Russians, after fighting for Constantinople and a Balkan hegemony, overthrew an autocracy, tried to establish republican democracy, and passed rapidly from social democracy to communism". All these statements imply that human beliefs and aims were the causes of historical events, but, if one examines them closer, one finds at once that their superficial simplicity conceals obscurity and

complexity. Who is this Germany or Britain or France or America believing, desiring, aiming, willing? There were Germans who desired and aimed at world dominion; there were Germans who sent the ultimatum to France and Russia; there were Germans who refused to evacuate Belgium; there were Germans who aimed at establishing respect for public law, at making the world safe for democracy, or at overthrowing autocracy and establishing socialism; there were Germans who cared for none of these things, but who nevertheless fought and died to make "this great historical catastrophe". To explain the psychology which caused the war would, therefore, require an unravelling of the complex of communal psychology. The last stage in this process of causation is beliefs, desires, aims, and actions of rulers, governments, statesmen, but behind these, moulding or at least influencing them, are beliefs, desires, aims, actions of groups of men in political parties, industrial, financial, and commercial companies, workers' organizations, philanthropic, nationalist, or patriotic associations; and behind these is the agitated, turbid, uncharted sea of popular opinion. If we are to understand what human beliefs and aims caused the war, we must understand the relation between the policies and acts of governments, the aims of groups, interests and parties, and the confused currents of belief and desire in the minds of ordinary men.

The simple statements in which people explain the causes of the war conceal a further and greater complexity. They say that the aims were world dominion, or the rights of small nations, or public law, or self-determination, or freedom, or democracy, or socialism, or communism. These words are intended to define the content of communal psychology, and the

THE DELUGE

content of communal psychology is those beliefs, aims, and ideals which are for the most part fluid in popular opinion, crystallize in the programmes of parties and the objects of groups and interests, and finally either reappear or disappear in the acts of governments. But these words, and therefore the beliefs and aims which, we say, caused the catastrophe of the war, are extraordinarily complex. To say exactly what freedom is, or the rights of small nations or democracy or self-determination or socialism, is an extremely difficult task, and anyone who attempts it will soon find himself involved in the intricacies of political, economic, social, legal, and ethical principles. To fight or to die for freedom is to fight and die for something which the most subtle and profound thinkers, from the time of Plato and Aristotle for nearly two thousand five hundred years, despite the most heroic efforts, have failed to define in consistent or even intelligible language. That all through those two thousand five hundred years human beings have at intervals fought and died for freedom does not make it more intelligible: it is merely an interesting, and possibly important, fact in the natural history of human beings. People are now beginning to fight and to die for socialism, and here again the simplicity and intelligibility of the object for which they fight and sacrifice their lives may be measured by the fact that it is the subject of Karl Marx's *Das Kapital*.

The ideas which form the content of communal psychology, and which are causes of world catastrophes and landmarks in history, are not simple. They have puzzled the wisest and subtlest minds, and few if any of those who are prepared to die or to make others die for them could express them in intelligible language. In the acts and facts which we

call history these ideas are transformed into ideals, and word and action both show that neither among those who follow nor among those who resist these ideals is there any general agreement as to the meaning to be attached to them. Herr Bethmann-Hollweg, sitting on one side of the battle line, thought that he was fighting "for right and freedom", and President Wilson, sitting on the other, thought that he was fighting for "the rights of mankind" and "the freedom of nations". The dilemma here cannot be escaped. Either Herr Bethmann-Hollweg's freedom was the same as Mr. Wilson's, in which case the war was not fought for freedom but for a stupid misunderstanding, or Herr Bethmann-Hollweg's conception of freedom was different from that of Mr. Wilson's, in which case we have a political, social, and historical problem, which it is of the highest importance that we should understand. The second alternative in this dilemma is almost certainly to some extent true. Even among those who were upon the same side of the battle fronts disagreement as to the meaning of their common ideas and ideals is so obvious. History has already shown that M. Clemenceau and Mr. Wilson did not attach the same meaning to freedom and the rights of nations, and all over Europe allies who fought side by side for the right of self-determination are now fighting one another in order to decide what it meant.

There is still a further complexity which adds to the difficulty of any scientific analysis of communal psychology or of its effects upon history. A community, nation, state, government, party, group, not only has inconsistent and contradictory beliefs and aims; it is not only that they march out to battle under banners inscribed with watchwords, like "liberty" and "democracy", the meaning of which,

they can neither explain nor understand. The strangest and the most important fact about communal psychology is that its content is largely the ideas, beliefs, and aims of the dead. There used to be, and still is in some countries, a law of mortmain or the dead hand under which it is not the living but the dead who determine the use and ownership of property. The dead man's hand was always being stretched out of the grave to control the holding of land, the sowing of fields, the building of houses. It requires but little knowledge of history to recognize that there is also a psychological law of the dead hand. A great deal of the complexity in such ideas as freedom and democracy, much of the difficulty in understanding what they mean, comes from their history. The freedom for which the German Chancellor fought was not Herr Bethmann-Hollweg's idea of freedom; the democracy for which the President of the United States fought was not Mr. Wilson's idea of democracy; thousands of men died for a "Germany" or a "France" which was not their idea of Germany or France. These were all in great part dead men's ideas, thought and fought over generations, sometimes centuries, ago. There can be no understanding of history, of politics, or of the effects of communal psychology which does not take into consideration the tremendous influence of this psychological dead hand, the dead mind. At every particular moment it is the dead rather than the living who are making history, for politically individuals think dead men's thoughts and pursue dead men's ideals. Very often these are not only the thoughts and aims of dead men, but are themselves dead and rotten; they may be the mere ghosts of beliefs, ideals from which time has sapped all substance and meaning. Indeed it seems sometimes as if it is only the

dead mind which can stir deeply political passions, and that a political ideal must have lost much of its meaning and relevance for the living before they will pursue it passionately.

The extent to which the dead mind controls the beliefs and aims of the living is an important question which will be explored further in this book. Here I propose merely to give one or two examples of its working in order that the reader may start with a clear idea of it. All political and social ideas have a long history; they are handed down from century to century, from generation to generation, and the changes in them are usually very gradual and often unperceived by those who receive them out of the past and hand them on to the future. Their immense age and their slowness of growth and their resistance to change often make them incongruous, irrelevant, and unmeaning in the material world and the human psychology of a later age. But the tradition, sentiment, and romance which gathered about them when they were the new and living ideas of living men, perhaps a hundred or a thousand years ago, the passion which they roused when their champions did battle for them against the dead ideas of those generations, these still persist and, aided by the tenacious conservatism of the human mind, cause the ideas themselves to persist. These dead ideas which are inconsistent and unmeaning in their new environment necessarily come in conflict with the new ideas which new circumstances have brought to life. But the old is nearly always stronger than the new, and the dead than the living. Thus you have the tyranny of the dead mind. In many cases where whole classes or groups of human beings are not subjected to the particular tyranny of some dead idea which is firmly rooted in the minds of some other

THE DELUGE

individual or class, they easily recognize the existence of this process. Thus nearly all Englishmen and Americans perceive that the ideas of Kaiserism and Tsarism were relics which had persisted in some human minds from a past age, and were incompatible with the facts of modern life and with the political ideas which had grown out of those new facts. When the Emperor, Wilhelm II., appeared in shining armour and spoke of the divine right of kings, we recognized that we were listening to the voice, not of a contemporary of the Deutsche Bank, Herr Ballin, and Herr Bebel, but of some old Elector of Brandenburg who had died four hundred years ago. The Tsar and Kaiser thought the thoughts and pursued the aims of dead feudal kings and counts of the fifteenth century, just rationalizing them sufficiently to travel by train and to fight with high explosive shells and dreadnoughts. The birth, position, and interests of these monarchs ensured their complete control by the dead mind, but its influence and that of its dead ideas extended to other circles and groups in Russia and Germany. These ideas, a little more rationalized, a little more adjusted to the insistent world of railways and great business men and socialists, naturally permeated the court and army and navy. Still more rationalized, with the sentiment, tradition, and romance which still attached to them subtly woven into the texture of modern patriotism and imperialism, or in Russia religion, they penetrated the minds of lawyers and doctors, working men and peasants. Here is an extreme and clear instance of the process of the dead mind, the control of the thoughts and aims of millions of men in the twentieth century by dead feudal kings.

But it is not merely in such extreme cases of "reactionary" conservatism that this process operates.

Practically every political principle and idea, every social principle or aim, if it is widely accepted, will be found to be controlled to a considerable extent by the dead mind. This is the explanation of that strange fact that no people are more conservative than liberals in their liberalism and revolutionaries in their revolutions. The ideas of freedom and liberty, for instance, for which the German Chancellor, the President of the United States of America, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, the Tsar of Russia, and even the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire were all fighting in the great war, were during the nineteenth century essentially ideas of liberalism and liberals. The meaning of this "freedom" and "liberty" will be investigated at some length in the following pages, and I do not wish to prejudge my own enquiry, especially as I confess myself at this stage to be completely in the dark as to its conclusions. But a very superficial acquaintance with the political history of Europe during the nineteenth century is sufficient to establish one certain conclusion. The idea of liberty in the mind of a liberal, living, let us say, on November 25, 1880, was determined to a very considerable extent by ideas with regard to liberty which were causing a tremendous turmoil in France on November 25, 1789. French revolutionary ideas of liberty were again largely determined by three writers, Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Rousseau, all of whom were dead in 1789 and whose ideas of liberty contained much which belonged to previous ages and eras rather than to the eighteenth century. Superficially this may seem to be only an example of an obvious and unimportant fact, that every political thinker uses the conclusions of his predecessors as a jumping-off place for his own theories, and that the political and social present, even when it is a revolu-

tion; grows out of a political and social past. But there is, I think, a more important and subtle fact concealed under this surface of mere evolution in political ideas and in society. The liberal of 1880 had made no selection or rejection in the ideas of liberty of 1789; he had swallowed them almost whole. He had not digested them or thought them into his own world and time and environment; they were not even, as they had been in 1789, a spontaneous and popular reaction against intolerable facts. In 1880 the French Revolution had already become a tradition with its halo of sentiment and romance; its doctrine of liberty, as accepted by official liberalism, was already conservative and respectable. Indeed the psychology of the liberal who believed in political liberty was hardly distinguishable from the psychology of the Kaiser who believed in the divine right of kings; each was controlled by the dead mind, the difference being that the one had surrendered his own mind to an Elector of Brandenburg who had died about 1500 and the other had surrendered his to Mirabeau who died in 1791. It is both an effect and a proof of this fact that political liberty, as understood by the nineteenth-century liberal, was scarcely less incompatible with and irrelevant to the industrialized modern Europe in which he lived than the rationalized feudalism and divine kingship of the Kaiser. While Mirabeau ninety years after his death, through the brains of Mr. Bright and Mr. Gladstone, was making laws for us, as though Louis XVI. were still swaying on the throne of France and the mob storming the Bastille in the name of the rights of man, steam and electricity had already created a new world in which the real problem was economic rather than political liberty.

One more example of this process of the dead

PRELIMINARY

mind may be given. In 1880 the French revolutionaries of 1789 were, through liberals, and even conservatives, determining the structure of society in most countries of Europe where it was not being determined by mediaeval emperors, kings, or electors. But already thirteen years before that date Karl Marx had published *Das Kapital*. I am not concerned here either with the merits of that book or with the soundness of Marx's principles of social organization. The next fifty years proved, however, that the new economic conditions upon which Marx laid such stress had created a political and social problem of great importance and urgency. His ideas in 1867, and still in 1880, were new, and they were living ideas in the sense that they dealt with a growing problem intimately affecting the lives of vast numbers of living human beings. In course of time those principles have been accepted to form the political principles and programmes of parties and even Governments; but the process by which revolutionary socialism has won acceptance and has influenced social and political structure bears a strange resemblance to that by which feudalism and the rights of man had established themselves in the minds of nineteenth-century reactionaries and liberals. When Karl Marx died in 1883, the facts upon which he insisted were treated as non-existent by "responsible people" and by those in authority; as for his theories and doctrines, those who believed in them were a minute handful of persons whom governments and governing classes, when aware of their existence, regarded as dangerous and therefore criminal, or deranged and therefore lunatic. If you had walked into the "mother of parliaments" one day some ten years after the birth of modern socialism, you would have found a party of "conservatives" desperately

fighting the lapping waves of democracy in the shape of a proposal to allow householders to vote, and a party of "liberals" who supported the proposal with an uncomfortable feeling that it might be going too far and too fast in democracy. Fifty years after the publication of *Das Kapital*, vast numbers of people had come to recognize the existence of those economic facts upon which Marx insisted and the social problem created by them; there were now, too, a large number of people in Europe who were socialists and who were not either obviously criminal or lunatic. Yet there are three significant facts with regard to the position and progress of socialism after half a century. Though there were many socialists and many socialist parties, there had never yet been a socialist government and no government had ever allowed any part of the political or social structure to be directly or admittedly modified on socialist principles. Such modifications had indeed taken place, but they were never admitted officially or publicly to be socialistic. Secondly a change had already begun to take place in Marx and his ideas. He himself was dead and his ideas were already dying, dying not under the attacks of their opponents but in the minds of their supporters. Socialism was ceasing to be a living, growing idea, it was becoming a dogma, and a dogma is simply a belief which the living receive as a command from the dead. Marx was indeed already issuing his commands from the grave to Marxists in precisely the same way as the Kaiser's dead ancestors issued their commands to him. How far this process had gone only became clear in 1917, when a socialist government at last came into power in Russia and began to apply Marxist dogma as if it consisted of commandments issued amid thunder and lightning by God from Mount Sinai and appropriately graven

upon tablets of stone. Thirdly, the final stage in the process of the dead mind was already overtaking socialism. Whenever large numbers of people accept a political, religious, or social dogma, accept a belief from the dead, interest and controversy inevitably come to centre not in the truth or falsehood of the idea, but in the exact form of the dogma. When Jehovah thunders on Sinai, we do not ask whether His commands are true or false, right or wrong, we are only concerned to discover exactly what He is telling us to do. Again, suppose God, speaking through the mouths of saints and bishops, says to us: "It is necessary to your everlasting salvation that you should believe, and without doubt you shall perish everlastingly if you disbelieve, that the Father is incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible: and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible; and yet there are not three incomprehensibles: but one incomprehensible";¹ we do not ask whether this statement be true, but what it means, in order that when we know what it means, we may believe it and avoid everlasting damnation. So, too, if socialism be the true faith and Marx its prophet, controversy soon begins to rage about questions of meaning and interpretation, whether Marx meant this or did not mean that, whether the "true" socialist is a communist or a syndicalist or a State socialist, a revolutionary or a reformist, whether the dictatorship of the proletariat and soviets are or are not integral parts of the "true" faith.

The preceding paragraphs have not been a digression. Let me retrace the steps of the argument. The war, everyone agrees, was a great historical catastrophe which marks the end and the beginning

¹ The punctuation of this sentence is not mine, but Saint Athanasius's.

of an epoch. If you examine the causes which are commonly assigned to the war and the reasons and objects for which the combatant nations alleged that they were fighting, you see at once that these causes were psychological; they were ideas and ideals, beliefs and aims inside the minds of human beings; they were the content of communal psychology. But the causes of the war and the aims for which men fought are not simple. Their complexity and obscurity can be traced to three main causes. In the first place, in order to understand the nature of communal beliefs or aims of which the effects are actions of nations or governments, one has to know the relations of popular opinion, parties and groups and classes, and the rulers or government both to one another and to the particular beliefs, policies, and aims. It is often an extremely difficult thing to determine exactly what the beliefs and intentions were which caused an individual to act in a particular way; the difficulty is infinitely greater in the case of a nation or a government. Secondly, the meaning of political and social ideas, like freedom, liberty, self-determination, socialism, is itself nearly always extremely complex and obscure, and there is rarely agreement as to their nature, either among those who believe in them or those who disbelieve in them. Thirdly, political ideas always have a long history; as they are handed on from generation to generation, they may be changed or modified slowly and slightly, but in the main they are imposed by the past upon the present, by the dead upon the living. Consequently they are nearly always applicable rather to the past than to the present or the future. This long history and slow development of political ideas adds to their complexity and obscurity, and without a knowledge of their history it is impossible

PRELIMINARY

to determine their place as causes of historical events.

Human beings have been writing their own history for several thousand years. Here is a tremendous event in it caused not by nature or by an act of God, but by themselves, by their own political and social beliefs and aims and acts. It marks, they say, the end of one era in human history and the beginning of another. Surely, then, if we are standing at such a critical point in human history, a point at which a whole epoch has ended with a crash and we must start out upon new paths of development, surely it is reasonable to turn to history and historians and ask for some explanation of this extraordinary cataclysm and some guidance as to the future. Personally for three years now I have been eagerly waiting for the voice and verdict of the historian. The historian, I had been told, was a scientist, and his science was concerned with the causes and effects of events in the communal history of human beings. I hoped, therefore, for some scientific investigation and explanation of the causes of this remarkable event, at least an analysis of those communal beliefs and aims which had caused the sudden and catastrophic end of a whole historical era. And if it be true that we are standing at the beginning of a new era, then it seemed reasonable to ask the scientific historian for some guidance towards the future; with his knowledge of the past he should be able to indicate to us the most important among the conflicting currents and movements in communal psychology and even to say to us: "If human beings adopt this idea or aim as the basis of their society, the new era will have the following characteristics; if they adopt that belief and aim, it will have the following characteristics".

I had hoped for an explanation of the great war

which, I observe, the ordinary man finds inexplicable. I agree with the ordinary man, and I thought that the historian could and would help us to understand its place "in the history of the human race". But gradually it became clear to me that the historian was going to disappoint us. Contemporary history is treated either as a mere record of events, or the raw material of a work of art, or a department of contemporary politics. I have, therefore, determined to undertake the task myself. I want nothing less than to "explain the great war and understand its place in human history". I can forestall critics by agreeing with them that it is presumptuous and ridiculous to attempt a task which is above one's powers and in any case probably impossible.

Any attempt to explain the great war and its causes, to determine its real place in human history, must be preceded by some discussion of method of investigation. Before it is possible to deal with the complex phenomena we must decide upon the real function of history, and lay down for ourselves the general rule for a scientific historical method of investigation. This preliminary question I propose to consider in the following chapter.

CHAPTER II

PAST AND FUTURE

HISTORIANS and philosophers, from Polybius to Signor Croce, have quarrelled for some two thousand years about the nature and function of history. I do not propose to strike a blow in this battle which will probably still be raging two thousand years hence. But the subject of this book, or the material of its subject, is history, and the bare statement in the last chapter of the question which I had hoped would be answered for me and of the problem which I propose to investigate has in fact thrown us into the very centre of this controversy. If I begin now, as I propose to do, to consider the right method of an attempt to explain the great war, to fix its place in "the history of the human race", to determine causes and effects, it may appear that I have entered the lists by declaring what the nature of history is and what functions it should perform. I wish, therefore, at the outset to guard myself, as well as I may, from future blows, by making my position clear in this *mêlée* of combatants.

As is so often the case in these kinds of philosophical or semi-philosophical controversy most of the differences of opinion can be traced ultimately to differences of definition. Each disputant starts by defining, as history, something which interests him particularly or which he *thinks* extremely important.

and, since what interests Macaulay is not what interests Acton or what is important to Taine, is not important to Signor Croce, we immediately have four different kinds of history. If they and their followers were, each and all, then content to say: "The thing which I call history is not the thing which you call history", each would remain perched on his own impregnable logical position and free to engage in the harmless and tedious business of quarrelling about definitions. But the pacts and sects of historians and philosophers are not content with this position; it is not enough for them to have taken "history" as a convenient name for something which interests them, or even to distinguish it clearly from the other things which have interested and been called "history" by other historians and philosophers, no, they must go on to say that their particular "history" is the only true reflection, representation, or microcosm of some one universal, eternal, supreme idea of history laid up for us somewhere in a Platonic heaven. The effect of this procedure can best be shown by transferring it to a branch of human enquiry and knowledge in which the fallacy is very rarely made or tolerated. Suppose a man defined a dog as "a quadruped of a buff colour with a snub nose and a curly tail", and was convinced that all dogs must conform to the type of a universal, eternal, and supreme pug-dog, while another man defined a dog as "a quadruped covered with patches or tufts of closely curled white or black hair, with longish legs and a short, straight tail", and was convinced that all dogs must conform to the type of a universal, eternal, and supreme poodle, these two men would not only quarrel, legitimately and logically, as to whether a poodle was a pug or a pug a poodle, but they would also infallibly, illegitimately,

and illogically go on to quarrel over the question whether a pug ought to be a poodle or a poodle ought to be a pug.

It is true that I, like everyone else, have my particular and private passion for certain pugs, poodles, philosophical systems, political and social ideals, and that I have an almost irresistible impulse to believe and declare that my cherished, terrestrial pug, my idea of history, my pet socialism and internationalism are each the exact and only earthly facsimile of some divine, eternal, and true idea. But the impulse has to be resisted, and, though in the present chapter I shall state what I call history and what is my idea of history, I shall do so only in order to perform the one unevadable duty: to define one's terms and explain one's method before embarking upon a long investigation or a complicated discussion. But when I say that this is history or that that is its function, I must only be taken to mean what I say, to be speaking only about my "history", the particular series of facts and their mental manipulation to which I claim the right of giving the name "history". I am not, thereby, disputing the right of Polybius or Lord Acton, Hegel or Taine or Signor Croce, to choose some other series for some other method of manipulation and to call it, too, history. I must not be misunderstood to mean or to imply that my history is superior in any way or more real or more important or more history than their histories. In the beginning at anyrate the difference between us is merely one of definition.

All history, even Signor Croce's, though he admits it rather grudgingly, deals with the past. And, though one may speak by a kind of metaphor of the history of literature or philosophy or chess or pugs, the simple, unqualified word is always under-

stood in schools and by the ordinary person to have as its subject the past of the human race. It is this ordinary, everyday, schoolboy use of the word which I take as the groundwork or kernel of my definition. History in its simplest form is the story or record of the past of the human race. The historian concerns himself with the past of human beings upon the earth living in communities. This, from the point of view of my definition, is important. A man may be interested in and investigate and elucidate the past of human beings considered merely as individual, material, evolved bodies; the subject is of great interest and importance, but I would call it biology or anthropology rather than history. Again many people, and some of them famous "historians", are mainly interested in the past of human beings viewed simply as individuals. For them the history of Greece really means the speeches of Pericles, the psychology of Alcibiades, the character of Socrates, and the romantic Alexander. They see the history of each country or era as a necklace of great men and famous or infamous names; for instance the history of the French Revolution is "embodied" in the king and the queen, Mirabeau, Lafayette, Robespierre, Marat, Danton, Napoleon. I call these people biographers and psychologists rather than historians. Even when they appear to write "history", what really interests them is not mankind in masses or groups, but the strange secrets of the human heart, the drama of the human mind staged magnificently among kings and queens, wars and revolutions. Sometimes, it is true, they write the history of a period or of a nation, and their subject on the surface may appear to be the past of a human community, but even here they are concerned rather with the effect of individuals upon the period or the age rather than with the millions of

PRELIMINARY

nameless dead which were the age, period, race, nation. Such biographers and psychologists are often great artists; their works may be of immense value; their subject, however, happens not to be what I call history.

Mankind in the mass has often been compared, cynically or otherwise, to insects. To the historian proper the image of an ant-heap is almost inevitable. When he looks back into the past, he sees no great men or famous names, but myriads of minute and nameless human insects, hurrying this way and that, making wars and laws, building and destroying cities and civilizations. The swarm ebbs and flows over the earth and through the centuries, the groups converging and coalescing or breaking up and scattering. The story of this ant-heap, of its impersonal groups and communities and of their ebb and flow upon the earth, is history.

History may be a bare record of mankind in groups or communities. The historian takes a section of the ant-heap at a certain time or period, examines its records and documents, and tells us what was happening at the moment inside it. "They" were wearing togas or trousers, building Nineveh or burning Rome, making a king into a god or cutting his head off. The works of these recorders are often called chronicles, and it is frequently said that early historians should rightly be called chroniclers. But the point of view of the chronicler still exists, even when history has become highly developed and sophisticated. He is impersonal and indiscriminating in the sense that he rarely has a theory or is concerned with cause and effect. The scope of his vision into the past is limited to a particular moment of time, for he is the natural historian of the human insect, and what interests him is the bare fact that

the insect was doing a particular thing at a particular time. In consequence the resemblance between the activities of the human race and those of an ant-heap is nowhere more striking than in the pages of chroniclers. There is the same hurrying and scurrying of hordes of little creatures, each terribly intent upon its own particular piece of business, which at the same time in some mysterious way is obviously part of the communal business. And that business in the unanalyzed and isolated narrative of the chronicle seems to be made up of a number of blind, irrational, and inexplicable impulses. Read, for instance, in such a book as the *History of Persia* by Sir Percy Sykes, which is essentially a chronicle, the narrative of what is known about those "early civilizations" of Assyrians, Elamites, Babylonians, who built and burned their cities and slaughtered one another for many centuries in and around Mesopotamia. If we were not hypnotized by the tradition and dogma that there is some meaning and purpose in human history, it would be impossible to read that bare story without the same kind of shrinking or disgust as is caused by the spectacle of a mass of flies and other insects swarming over a dead body. Or take a long leap forward with the imagination, from this chronicle of what we are pleased to call primitive civilizations or uncivilized peoples, to our own times: imagine the history of the years 1914 to 1918 told in the style of a chronicle. The chronicler, with little or no comment or explanation, without searching for causes or troubling about effects, would relate the bald story of what the human race, divided into the groups called European nations, was doing between September 1914 and November 1918. Such a narrative might be extremely interesting and illuminating, but, if it were read by anyone who did not know that

PRELIMINARY

European man was highly civilized and rational, with a divine spark in his breast or brain (sometimes called a soul), with his eyes turned heavenwards and his feet steadily mounting the ladder of evolution; he would only see a strange spectacle of millions of little creatures engaged in destroying one another (when not burrowing in the earth); of other swarms frantically beating their ploughshares into shells; of lesser swarms, in the safe background and over the heads of the fighters, perpetually screaming abuse and noble words of defiance at one another; while here and there some little creatures, raised somewhat above their fellows, shake their fists at one another and explain in unintelligible language the causes of the commotion and their determination never to allow it to end.

It is possible that the chronicler is the only really scientific and philosophical historian, that there is no more to be said about the human insect than such facts as these: that in the year 2218 B.C. upon a plain in the land of Shinar it was trying to build out of bricks and slime a tower which might reach to heaven; that 1700 or 1800 years later around the Aegean Sea it was fighting, producing the plays of Sophocles and Aeschylus, and at nights upon Greek mountains by the light of torches, clothed in deer-skins and carrying ivy-wreathed wands, it tore in pieces goats and other animals and danced wildly to the sound of flutes and cymbals; that in A.D. 33 it crucified the Son of God; that 1500 years later it slaughtered in Germany and Holland 100,000 persons because they not only demanded the right to fish and hunt, but believed that adults and not infants should be baptized; and that in 1914 it slaughtered millions of persons in an effort to decide whether the world should be ruled by the German

Emperor or by democracy. It may indeed be that there is nothing more to be recorded of the human race than bare facts such as these, and that history, unperturbed by human arrogance, should be an almost infinite series of such facts. If so, the chronicler is a far profounder historian than philosophers like Signor Croce would ever be capable of imagining.

The philosophy of history which underlies the chronicle is so pessimistic and so humiliating that in this age of science and proud idealism we cannot accept it without a struggle. The historian introduces two theories, which are alien to the chronicler and his outlook, in order at least to make the story of human communities compatible with human dignity. These are the theories of progress and regression and of cause and effect. As I propose to accept them as a working hypothesis in this book, it is necessary to explain in what sense they are to be accepted.

History differs from chronicle, when besides recording a mere series of facts or events, it traces or implies in its record of them a movement and direction. And the movement is that of the life of the human animal as it is lived in communities, while the direction is conceived as either up or down, forward or backward. History is, in fact, either consciously or implicitly directed and inspired by the idea of "civilization". It no longer conceives the communal past of the human race as consisting of an infinite number of isolated events, acts, and activities, all of them equally significant and important, but as a continuous "life" in whose procession a series of events only acquires historical significance in so far as it indicates progress or regression. To the chronicler the fact that slime was used instead of mortar to build the tower of Babel is just as

PRELIMINARY

important, and therefore as worthy of record, as the object of the architecture; the historian may be able to read in the slime some evidence, as to the level which material civilization had reached in the land of Shinar, but the fact which he will seize upon as infinitely more relevant is the communal object of the builders, for it is that which really throws light upon their "cultural development", their civilization.

This idea of civilization is an extremely complex one. Although it is the background against which all true history is written, little has been done towards consciously and systematically investigating its meaning and validity. It is not my purpose in this chapter to define and explain it, since that can only be done, if it be explicable and definable, when we come to the last page of the last chapter, but it is necessary here to give some general indication of its sense and its relevance. Note first that historically we talk of different civilizations: we recognize that the civilization of ancient Greece was a "Greek civilization" differing from that of Rome or of China or from "western civilization" to-day. We mean by the word a very complex thing; it is not the form which society takes at any particular epoch; it is not the life of any individual or even the lives of all living individuals; it is not the method or standard of individual or communal life; it can best be described as the mould or matrix in which at any particular time or place a human community imposes upon individual lives an imprint and form. It embraces the existing framework of an organized society; the State and government, the laws and customs; the old gods and the new gods who will be found sitting in temples or upon thrones or even in Stock Exchanges; all the priests of all the gods who may be dead, dying, or living; the economic framework and organization;

a few books, a few pictures, and the music of a tom-tom or a brass band. But it also consists, I think, of something else; it embraces that mass of communal traditions, beliefs, aims, ideals which were referred to in the last chapter. It is through this network of communal beliefs and desires that the individual, in any particular time and place, receives some of the most characteristic and indelible marks of a temporal and local civilization, and thus the community itself maintains in the mass of individuals that cohesion and stability without which there could hardly exist a "civilized society".

If you took any individual out of any epoch or place, and could put him upon an operating-table and subject him to a scientific psychological dissection, you would find certain characteristics in him which were simply personal and individual, and a mass of others which he had received from this mould or matrix of the community in which he lived. His personal characteristics determine the quality of his emotions and character, his choice of ends within the limits set for him by his environment, the standard of mental or physical abilities; his other characteristics—which may for the sake of distinction be called communal—largely determine, not only in his actions and activities as a member of the community, but also in the inmost sanctuary of his personal life, the objects of his emotion, the content of his beliefs, and the ends of his actions. Sophocles, Socrates, and Alexander, Shakespeare, Bentham, and Wellington, were distinguished from their contemporaries by extraordinary originality and ability, but the first three were typically Greek and the second three typically English. Take the extreme cases of a Socrates and a Shakespeare. Socrates was so rebellious against the time and society in which he lived that his contem-

poraries could not tolerate his presence among them and put him to death; yet there is no more characteristic product of Athenian civilization of the fifth century than Socrates. The life that he lived, the thoughts that he thought, and the feelings that he felt ran between the very narrow lines which were ruled for him by Greek civilization, and with all his strange originality it was rarely that he succeeded in crossing them. The whole background of his life, beliefs, and aims was determined for him by the political and economic structure of Athenian society and by the vast complex of communal beliefs and aims of which he was himself so persistent a critic. So he lived and died a Greek and an Athenian of the fifth century, and he would not and could not have lived like that either in ancient Rome or in modern Europe or in any other time or place in the world's history.

The life and the works of Shakespeare bear in precisely the same way an imprint from the structure of Elizabethan society and from the communal psychology of England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. History, as was remarked before, should be little concerned with the Socrates's and Shakespeares, the Alexanders and Wellingtons; its facts are not to be sought for in the lives of famous men, but in the swarming ant-heaps that rose in Mesopotamia, Athens, Rome, or London. But if the lives and thoughts of these famous men, who were rebels, leaders, or geniuses, were so powerfully moulded by particular "civilizations", the effect upon the thousands or millions who remained undistinguished in the swarming heap must have been infinitely greater. From their birth they are cast by their civilization in a very rigid mould; it stamps them with a communal stamp and determines for them, as members of the

community, what kind of lives they shall lead, what kind of thoughts they shall think, and what kind of ends they shall pursue.

Civilization is local and temporal; it is not only the psychological matrix in which at any particular place or time the minds of individuals receive the imprint of a common form, it determines for those individuals the kind of lives which between narrow limits it is possible for them to live. Thus civilizations and their effects differ from place to place and change from age to age, and in these differences and changes the historian should find his chief concern, for they constitute what is called progress or regression. It is important to notice that the historian who takes this view of his task makes certain large assumptions.

(1) History is for him dynamic. A fact only becomes "historical", if it takes its place in a series, becomes part of that change or movement which is the ebb and flow of civilization. (2) This change and movement in the life of human communities are the result of a very complicated and subtle process of cause and effect. Civilization, as it is defined above, consists partly of the actual structure of society, *e.g.* the form of government and of other communal institutions, and partly of ideas, within the minds of individuals, regarding the community and the relations of individuals to it, that communal psychology which is an intricate mass of tradition, custom, beliefs, passions, ideals. First, these two factors in civilization interact, as cause and effect upon each other: the form of society into which a man is born is part cause of his communal psychology, while any change in communal psychology tends to modify the structure of society. The institution of slavery in Athens imprinted upon Aristotle's mind certain beliefs with regard to slavery which will not be found in the mind

PRELIMINARY

of a single Englishman born a hundred years after the Abolitionists, while a change in the communal attitude towards slavery has altered the whole structure of society in America. This is the answer to that ancient conundrum, the bulwark of conservatism, about making men good by Act of Parliament, for laws make and are made by men. In most ages and among most peoples this interaction of the structure of society and communal psychology upon each other never ceases. It is probably the factor chiefly responsible for gradual change, progress, or decay, in any particular civilization. Its working within a community is naturally most often accompanied by struggle. For each generation the matrix of civilization into which it has been born has been created by the dead, but the community or parts of it may have acquired beliefs and aims incompatible with the customs and institutions into which the dead built their own beliefs and aims. There then comes that struggle between the old order and the new or between the possessors and the dispossessors with which we are so familiar in recorded history. The struggle is, however, only important as a symptom of ferment; the quality of the lives which will be lived by the next generation, by future generations, is determined by the way in which the old order and the new psychology interact upon each other. An example may be briefly given.

The sixteenth century in Europe was very markedly an age of ferment. The old order was crystallized in the Church of Rome, and its institutions and doctrines were deeply imprinted upon the minds of men and determined the lives which they lived. But in almost every class of the community new institutions, beliefs, and aims had developed which were no longer compatible with those of the Holy Church.

Territorial nationalism and a new kind of patriotism had grown slowly and had produced great kings who wished to be absolute masters in their own houses and whose loss of faith in the Pope's infallibility was accelerated by a desire to get possession of the Pope's riches. In some parts of Europe the aristocracy had already become so patriotic that an international religion seemed to them unseemly and inconvenient. The rediscovery of the ancient worlds of Greece and Rome and the discovery of the new world of America had a disturbing effect upon the minds of that class which in modern times has received the name of "intellectual"; it began to teach the dangerous doctrine that even in religion facts are more important than authority. Lastly, new communal ideas, and in particular this new idea that the voice of God was nobody's private property, had penetrated to that lowest stratum of peasants and artisans upon whom mediaevalism, with its Pope, Cardinals, priests, and monks, its Emperor, kings, princes, and knights, its magnificent extravagance and its continual wars, still contrived to place the whole of its economic burden. The history of the Reformation is the history of a confused attempt to alter the structure of mediaeval society in accordance with the new communal psychology, an attempt passionately resisted by those who found in the old order spiritual salvation and material advantages. If the Reformation had been a simple struggle between the old and the new, between the organization and authority of a holy and universal Church on the one side and the forces of nationalism, humanism, rationalism, and economic freedom on the other, the issue would have been simple too; it might have proved unnecessary for Europeans to endure the miseries of the Religious Wars, the Thirty Years' War, the French Revolution,

PRELIMINARY

or to burn and torture innumerable heretics, in order to establish the right of every man to be a patriot, to read the Bible, and to be paid wages. That these three great principles of modern civilization were not generally accepted until three centuries after Erasmus and Luther was due to the fact that the structure and psychology of mediaeval society still dominated the minds of the reformers whose new ideas made them its adversaries. Luther himself is an admirable example: he was three hundred years ahead of his times in his views of the persecution of Lutherans by the Church, but he recommended the Landgrave to slaughter priests as no better than Turks; he considered that the right way to deal with Jews was to tear their tongues out by the roots; and, when the peasants demanded the abolition of serfdom and the right to fish and hunt, he preached: "Therefore let all who are able hew them down, slaughter and stab them, openly or in secret, and remember that there is nothing more poisonous, noxious, and utterly diabolical than a rebel. You must kill him as you would a mad dog; if you do not fall upon him, he will fall upon you and the whole land."¹ The communal psychology of the founder of Protestantism was congenial to many of his contemporaries who had the power to translate his moral fervour into action: priests were treated like Turks; the Jews were persecuted; and 50,000 peasants were duly slaughtered like mad dogs, because, applying Lutheranism to the facts of their every-day existence, they began to doubt whether God had given to the upper classes absolute power over the labour, lives, and women of agricultural labourers. The interaction between the old and new communal psychology and the existing structure of society can be traced in the civilization

¹ See *Erasmus and Luther*, by Robert H. Murray, 1920, p. 244.

which developed in the next two hundred years. The great religious principle of argument by bonfire was established, and, as Erasmus predicted, men who began by burning books ended by burning persons. The Inquisition, as the organ of priests, had an effective answer to those Protestants who would treat them as Turks, and the stake became a recognized instrument of civilization. The slaughter of peasants with which Protestantism celebrated its birth, reinforced by the religious wars of the sixteenth century, the Thirty Years' War, the wars of Louis XIV., and the Seven Years' War, kept the agricultural labourer and the artizan in their places until the end of the eighteenth century, and led inevitably to the revolutionary outburst in which the modern "proletariat" was born and immediately began to apply to its masters those violent methods of persuasion and civilization which for so many hundreds of years it had been learning from them. Meanwhile the new communal psychology of nationalism and patriotism, fostered by the wars of the seventeenth century, gradually modified the structure of European society, consolidated itself in the minds of individuals, and built itself externally into the framework of the modern national State. Thus after two hundred years human beings were ripe once more to take a step forward on the path of progress, and it only required the French Revolution and twenty years of the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars to establish those three principles, which, as was pointed out above, were the basis of nineteenth-century civilization: the right of the ordinary man to be a patriot, to be paid in wages, and to read the Bible.

This history of the sixteenth century and of its sequel, the French Revolution, admirably illustrates

PRELIMINARY

the interaction between the structure of society and communal psychology. The established order of civilization moulds the minds of men as they are born into the world and determines what they shall think and feel with regard to their relations as members of the community. But slight changes in the established order, external or fortuitous events, or the gradual infiltration and acceptance of new ideas and aims may cause profound changes in the communal psychology which demand a modification in the structure of society and so alter the form of that matrix which we call civilization. This interaction is always extremely complex. The double process of change which accompanies it is usually so gradual as to be almost imperceptible to the living, but it is in this that the historian must search for the causes of that mysterious rise and fall of empires, of the progress and decay of civilizations. But while the changes are as a rule gradual, there have continually come moments in the world's history, when the pace or momentum quickens; the acceptance of new ideas or aims has gradually widened the gulf between the structure of society and communal psychology, or an event, like the discovery of a continent or the invention of a steam engine, has a sudden, violent reaction upon both; the result is an explosion, upheaval, or revolution, a landmark in history, the end of an era and the beginning of an age.

Let me recapitulate in order that I may show the exact position to which the argument has brought us. I was saying that the historian makes certain large assumptions. First he assumes a change or movement which constitutes the ebb or flow of civilization. His second hypothesis is that historical changes can be shown to be the result of a process of cause and effect; he claims to be able to show that

the movement from one stage of a civilization to another is the result of the interaction of particular events, the organization and institutions of society, and communal psychology. But there is (3) another assumption, and a very important one, which historians—in the sense in which I use the word—must always make. They are not concerned merely to analyze the causes of historical changes, to show that if men give thrones to kings or votes to women, if they believe in the divine right of princes or that all men are born equal, if they long to paint the map red or to make it safe for democracy, in each case this will have a particular effect upon the kind of life which those men live individually and communally. Historians not only state what kind of life is produced by men's communal acts or thoughts, they make or imply a judgment upon its quality. They assume the possibility of judging whether historical changes are good or bad, whether movement in the record of the human race is forwards or backwards, a progress or regression.

The task thus assigned to, and the powers claimed for, the historian are certainly very considerable, and it might be thought presumptuous not to remain satisfied with them. In that case only the past would be the province of history. But if the claims and assumptions of the historian are justified, it should be possible to apply the principles of his science to the living and the unborn as well as to the dead. As he investigates and analyzes the movement of communal ideas, and traces how it appears both as cause and effect of historical events and the actions of communities and of individuals, he will at the same time deliver or imply a judgment whether any particular current of civilization was forward or backward, in other words, whether a particular com-

PRELIMINARY

munal psychology and the civilization which is linked with it and is its product were better or worse than those that preceded it. In doing this he should have one eye upon the past and the other upon the present and the future. For the historian—in my sense of the word—should have the courage of his assumptions and his convictions. If the kind of historical cause and effect which we have been considering worked upon the plain in the land of Shinar, at Athens when Anutos and Meletos secured the conviction and execution of Socrates, in the Germany of Luther and in the Paris of Robespierre, then it is to-day at work in London and Paris and is building up the civilization which will be enjoyed or suffered by our children and grand-children. Nothing could be more false than the modesty of a historian who ignores this fact. He cannot be allowed to ride off on the sublime pretence that he is a cold impartial scientist, withdrawn into a political vacuum where he is engaged in reconstructing for some historical museum out of fossilized relics the skeleton of extinct civilizations. He is doing nothing of the kind: he is dissecting, analyzing, testing the living tissues of society, the organic machinery of civilization. He can or he should be able to tell us a great deal about what nourishes or starves those tissues, about the causes which produce stunted, barren, miserable, or free and generous civilizations.

It follows from what I have said that my historian becomes a scientific investigator of progress and regression in human communities. There comes upon the world one of these "great events" like the great war which may be of no importance in the eye of God or in stellar spaces, but which has this importance for us that, besides increasing the sum of human misery, it dislocates the frame-work of the society in

which we are doomed to live, makes, as we say, a break with the past, and compels us to find a new mould or matrix which will stamp its character upon the rest of our lives and upon those of many generations to come after us.¹ The historian, if he had conceived his work to be such as I have sketched in the previous pages, would be able to "place" this event in the history of the human race in its relation to progress or regression, and thus at the same time he would be able to show its significance for the future. Plato, I think, and those who have been seduced by his sublimities, look too far ahead and too high when they say that the world should be governed by philosophers. The earth will have cooled almost to the condition of the frigid moon before the communal passions of the human insect cool sufficiently for him to allow reason to control his political actions. But there may be an intermediate state between the Republic of Plato and the Republic of M. Poincaré, and one more immediately practicable. I make the suggestion, never, I believe, made before, that the world should be governed by historians.

And here it is impossible to resist a digression. It is possible that the world itself was dimly conscious of this fact in 1918. To many millions of people in

¹ There are a good many people who seem to hold that while in theory all this may be true, it is of very little practical importance to the individual. They believe that the framework of society, the laws and political organization and policy and all that I have defined as the "matrix" of civilization, have but a negligible effect upon the lives of individuals. This is a fallacy. The new matrix of European civilization is being made, as I write, in Paris, Berlin, Brussels, and the Ruhr. Already one can see that it is patently different from that of the years 1900 to 1914, and that it is having a direct and painful effect upon the lives of many thousands of Germans. Is it safe to assume that the Germans, in this respect, are unlike the rest of the world, and are the only inhabitants of civilized Europe who find their individual lives affected by the policy and communal psychology of themselves and their neighbours?

PRELIMINARY

Europe the war had come with something of a shock; they accepted the fact that the war was inevitable and that they had fought it for existence or for democracy, and yet something or other seemed to be disquieting and unsatisfactory. Was it, indeed, inevitable that national existence and democracy could only be maintained by the painful and uncomfortable process of fighting a European war for four years? Wasn't there, perhaps, something wrong with politics, policy, and government? Might there not be something in what those wretched "defeatists" had been saying for four years in all the belligerent countries—that it was the old pre-war system and the ideas behind it, and not the gesticulating Kaiser or the dead King Edward, who were responsible for the war? This confused and half-conscious questioning and disquiet had produced an unstable psychology in the masses of most European countries; they were ready for something new, when peace had to be made in Paris. And chief among those who went to Paris to make the peace was a historian. President Wilson was a historian in any sense of the word. He thought that the past contained lessons for the present and the future, and that, rightly read and interpreted, it could supply the world with principles of policy and government which might be put into practice, might make great wars less inevitable, and might even enable human beings consciously to build up a new and better civilization.

President Wilson was not merely a historian; he had been sitting in one of the world's highest places and preaching from it historically for four years. Alone among those who could speak with what is called authority he had tried to "place" the catastrophe in the history of the human race, and he went to Paris openly proclaiming that the peace settle-

ment should be based upon the lessons of the past. That he failed has itself become a lesson and a part of history, but his failure does not, as some may think, disprove what was said above. He was beaten partly by his own mistakes, partly by the dead hand, and partly by the cunning of politicians who believe that the proper foundations for civilization are force, patriotism, cupidity, revenge, and retribution. His defeat does not show that the world is a better place when ruled by M. Clemenceau and Mr. Lloyd George than it would be if ruled by Mr. Wilson, but only that in the present state of our civilization two politicians can trip up one historian. The really interesting fact is that for a short period in 1918 and 1919 the world itself, the millions of puzzled, disquieted, inarticulate persons who had fought the war and were to pay for the peace, was on the side of history. There was not a country at that moment, except perhaps the United States, in which the vast mass of the people were not followers of President Wilson. They cheered him enthusiastically as he drove in open carriages through the streets of their cities and they demanded that peace should be made in accordance with the history lessons which he had delivered to them and the principles which he had laid down for them. So strong and so genuine was this temporary conversion that even the politicians who broke President Wilson had to swear to their people that they accepted his principles and had built the peace upon them.

Misery and Mr. Wilson had produced in the world, during the last years of the war and the first weeks of the peace, not a change of heart, but a change of mind. Hitherto ordinary men, and the great men who were their rulers and statesmen, had regarded high politics and civilization, from one point of view,

PRELIMINARY

as acts of God or decrees of fate and, from another, as a complicated sphere of confused action in which individuals, classes, and nations struggled for careers or existence, for honour or prestige, for power or profit. But now for the first time, the minds of the masses, stimulated by high explosive shells, bombs, and Mr. Wilson's speeches, had acquired something which I can only describe as the historical mind. If you had asked them what they wanted, no doubt they would not have answered: "A peace builded upon history, communal psychology, common sense, and reason"; but that is what they meant, and they showed their meaning in the only way open to masses—by cheering Mr. Wilson as he took off his silk hat to them driving by Nelson's statue in Trafalgar Square or the Arc de Triomphe in Paris.

The mood and the mind passed. Things very soon got back, as they did after the Napoleonic wars, "to a wholesome state again" in which every nation was for itself and God for us all, and the future of civilization depended upon hanging the Kaiser and making Germany pay. The historian will, however, feel neither bitterness nor despair because it was only for a moment that the world seemed disposed to take his science seriously. He will remark that in the sight of history a thousand years are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night. He will reflect that it took many thousands of years before there was a sufficiently wide and permanent change in communal psychology to cause human beings to acquire generally a distaste for human flesh, whether raw or roasted. This was, one may assume, a real step forward upon the path of civilization, but it was not accomplished rapidly or suddenly. Probably many pioneers and reformers paid the penalty of political failure and were eaten by their opponents before

PAST AND FUTURE

their view of cannibalism was generally accepted. So that the historian, contemplating the tragic failure and ruin of Mr. Wilson at the hands of Mr. Lloyd George and M. Clemenceau and the apparently complete snuffing out from the world of the historical mind, may console himself with the thought that in past ages many Mr. Wilsons must have seemed tragic failures, as they were beaten and eaten by the Mr. Georges and the M. Clemenceaus of those times, while it is inconceivable that, even in private, the Mr. George and M. Clemenceau of our time would find themselves in disagreement with Mr. Wilson on the subject of cannibalism.

Here, as is so often the case, I find that my digression has led me back circuitously into the stream of my argument. I was saying that the historian should be able to "place" an event like the war in the history of the human race in relation to progress or regression and should at the same time be able to show its significance for the future. It follows that one of the most important questions which the historian has to consider is the scale of time against which he is to measure and judge events. For consider the different significance which will rightly be attached to an event like the defeat of President Wilson by one man measuring it against the scale of a four years' war or a generation or even a century of history and by another man in whose sight a thousand years are but as yesterday when it is past. In the history of the war and in its political and social effects upon our generation this may be reasonably regarded as either a blessed or a disastrous event of immense importance. Even if one takes the longer period of 100 years, one may still assume that the question whether the ideals of Mr. Wilson or those of M. Clemenceau and Mr. George prevailed retains considerable importance.

PRELIMINARY

But if the historian's scale against which he is measuring the figure of the American President be increased very much beyond a century, if he begin, however tentatively, to consider it in its relation to the history of the human race rather than to that of ephemeral nations and their vacillating policies and fortunes, new elements or factors are immediately introduced which may alter not only the significance, but even the nature of particular events. I will not elaborate this point here, because I hope to do so and to make my position quite clear in some of the following chapters; I will only say that it seems to me possible that in the history of the human race no particular events have any great importance in the sense in which they undoubtedly do have great importance in the history of a generation or of one or two centuries. In the life of a nation a glorious victory may after a few years show itself to have been the first step to disaster, and out of the ruins of what at the moment seemed complete disaster may spring an age of vigorous civilization. Famous men, mosquitoes, and herrings compete with one another for the honour of having been the cause of the rise or fall of races and nations. All this leads me to suspect that particular events, victories or defeats and the successes and failures of great men or mosquitoes, have little importance in the history of civilization except as signposts, except as indicating in what direction at any particular moment communal psychology and civilization itself are travelling.

The importance to the historian, who is attempting to "place" a great event in the history of the human race, of deciding the scale of time against which he is to measure particular events is clear from these considerations. The scale commonly used in history is that of a lifetime or generation. The historian in-

stinctively looks at an event like the French Revolution through the eyes of a contemporary; he judges it as he would have judged it had he been alive at the time, and the extreme limit of his vision is perhaps a generation on each side of his own birth and his own death. The maximum scale of the historian's vision, therefore, rarely exceeds a hundred years, and this is much too small and too rigid to make scientific history possible.

The scale of time which the scientific historian keeps in his mind must be continually varying, and he must be completely clear at any particular moment what scale he is using. What this means will be explained if I now set down in outline the task which the scientific historian would, in my opinion, have to undertake in order to "place" the great war in the record of the human race and to judge it scientifically. This task would fall into four main divisions:

(1) The historian would have to begin with an investigation of the psychological antecedents and causes of the war. He would have to determine the nature of the matrix of civilization and communal psychology which made the event possible. In order to do this with precision he would have to select somewhat arbitrarily a particular and limited period of time for detailed investigation. I suggest that what is required is an account of the communal psychology which developed between the French Revolution and 1914 and ended in the war. Here the scale of time would be roughly and generally two centuries, but it must necessarily be elastic. We want to know in some detail and with some accuracy the course taken in the development of communal psychology during about 125 years and what part it played in causing an event which lasted four years. Our scale cannot, therefore, be consistently the whole

PRELIMINARY

previous history of the human race; it must sometimes contract to the vision of a man's lifetime and sometimes expand into the past beyond the eighteenth century. Nevertheless even in this investigation the historian should never lose sight of this background of "the whole history of the human race", for it is against that background that he must view his investigation and write his history.

(2) An investigation into the communal psychology of the years 1914 to 1918.

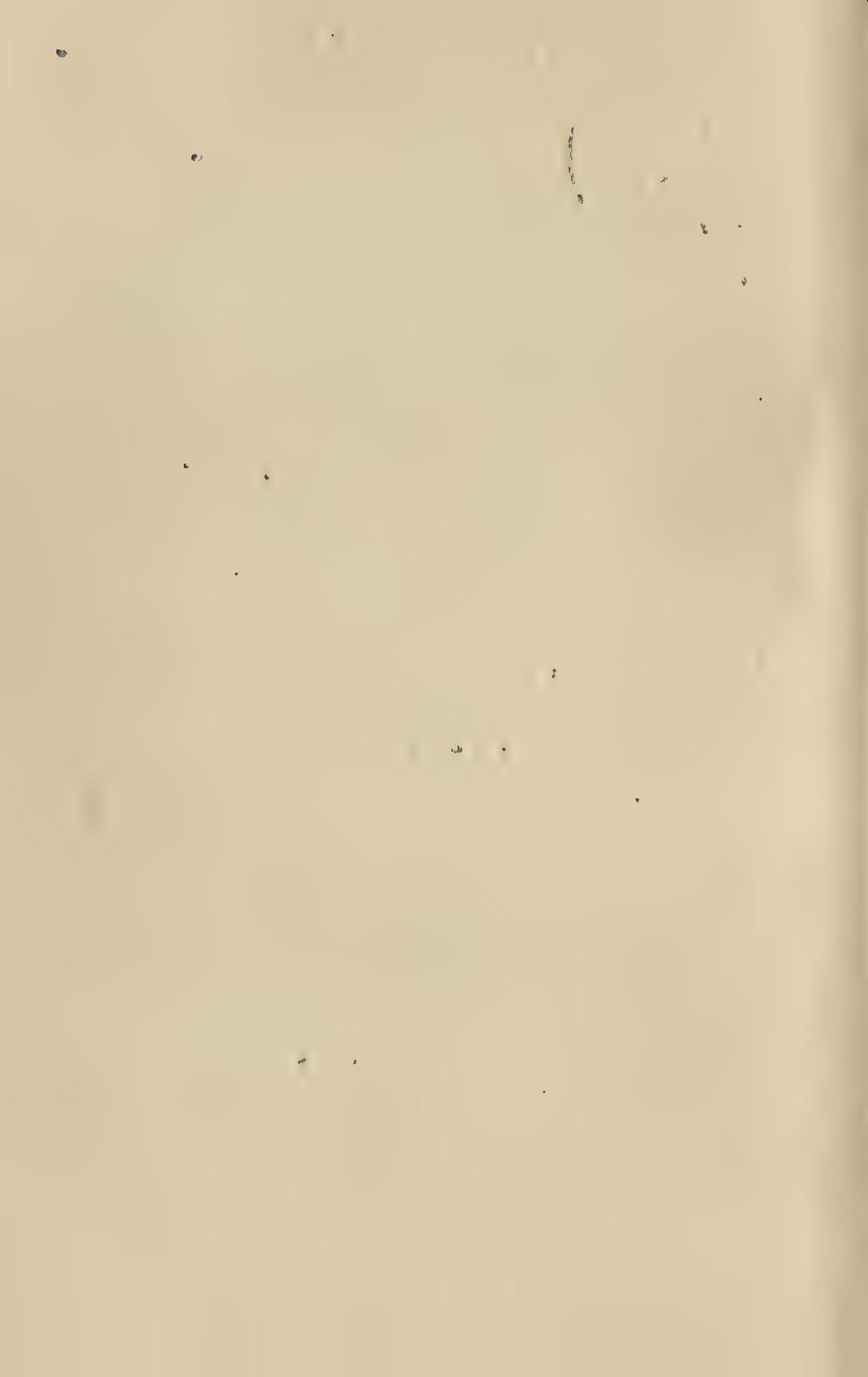
(3) An investigation into the communal psychology of the peace.

(4) At this point the historian, if his task was in any way possible and his abilities equal to it, would be in a position to "place" the war in the past history of the human race. He would be able to explain its causes and estimate its importance as an historical event. He would now have to attempt a still more difficult task, to "place" the war in relation not to the past but to the future. He should be able to say: "In our investigation we have seen civilization and communal psychology following many trails which appeared in the nineteenth century and lost themselves in the war and in the peace. As we observed those trails and tracks issue out of man's history, we were able to see the direction in which they carried him as he moved along them, and now we can predict that if in the future the history of the human race follows this trail, it will move in this direction, but that, if it follows that trail, it will move in that direction."

I propose to attempt the task sketched in the preceding chapters. I am not so presumptuous as to imagine that it can be achieved by me; but we live at a moment when to most people the world seems suddenly, after a period in which all things were

PAST AND FUTURE

stable and secure, to have become darkly confused and violently unstable, and into this doubt and perplexity, which is so deeply seated that it can be observed affecting not only politics and economics but art and literature, family life and personal relations, even a failure might bring some small ray of light or grain of knowledge.



PART II
COMMUNAL PSYCHOLOGY IN THE
NINETEENTH CENTURY

SECTION I
POLITICAL COMMUNAL PSYCHOLOGY

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

THERE are many people who hold that political ideas and beliefs played little or no part in causing the war. They may be divided into two schools. Some of them who have baptized themselves in the undiluted waters of socialist theory are compelled by the doctrine of their religion to see only economic causes in the modern world. The others are psychologists who believe that human beings are moved to action by their instincts or desires, and that it is only after a man has been thus impelled in one direction that he invents a good reason for not having chosen another. It may well be that these economic or philosophical historians are right, but neither school has, I think, yet presented us with an analysis of the communal psychology of the nineteenth century which proves their case. Certainly men, while they fought from 1914 to 1918, imagined that they were fighting for political ideas and that it was political beliefs that had impelled the world to move from a state of armed peace to war. It is those beliefs, and the belief that belief caused the war, which I propose to investigate.

Let us examine the political ideas for which, between 1914 and 1918, millions of human beings involved in the war believed themselves to be fighting. It is easy to state them generally. They may be

summed up in the three ideas, freedom, nationality, and democracy. The statesmen who were responsible for the war and for its conduct again and again proclaimed its object and the reason why the swords could not and would not be sheathed. They may have been mistaken, for even statesmen are human, but the peoples in whose names they professed to speak did not think so; it is inconceivable that the vast majority of those who suffered and fought and died would have continued to do so if they had not considered that Mr. Asquith and Mr. George, M. Clemenceau and M. Poincaré, Mr. Wilson, Herr Bethmann-Hollweg and the Kaiser, as the case might be, were accurately describing the reasons which induced them to do so. Thus in the declaration of war and peace aims, the apologies and protestations of belligerent statesmen, which now wear, it is true, a tragically fusty and faded air, you may still find the accurate record of what most men believed to be adequate reasons for their communal behaviour during the years 1914 to 1918.

Freedom, nationality, democracy—the words or the ideas occur again and again in the official manifestoes. The Allies were fighting a defensive war against an attack by militarist Germany upon the freedom of other nations, an attempt at world hegemony. At first the stress was laid upon its being an attack upon national freedom—the ideas of freedom and nationality—and in the later stages of the war these ideas re-emerged in the demand for the right of self-determination. But from the first another idea can be traced in the political communal psychology of the Allied nations, the idea of democracy. Despite the presence of Tsarism in their ranks, they were fighting for democracy against militarism and absolutism, though in the early days of the war, for

INTRODUCTORY

various reasons, of which the most important, perhaps, was the plight of Belgium, freedom and nationality overshadowed democracy. It was the entrance of America among the belligerents which made democracy the dominant idea, for the idea of democracy hereditarily takes the first place in the communal psychology of Americans. But though Mr. Wilson spoke pre-eminently for his own people in his famous phrase, "We must make the world safe for democracy", he was accepted as their spokesman by millions in the other Allied nations.

The Allies were fighting a defensive war for freedom, nationality, and democracy. It is hardly disputable that, whatever may have been the aims of military men, the majority of people in Germany and in the countries allied with her believed that they were fighting a defensive war for freedom and nationality. The German Chancellor actually called it a "defensive war for right and freedom".

Thus these three political ideas and ideals were certainly considered by the combatants to be, in some way, concerned with the war. They are ideas of which the significance is, as I said in a former chapter, neither stable nor clear, and it will be my object in this part of my book to analyse their meaning and to trace their connections with the political activities of European man which culminated in the civilization of the years 1914 to 1918. But without in any way prejudging the result of this analysis, it is possible and useful to point out some general, broad characteristics to be found in the ideas. The idea, for instance, of freedom when connected with that of nationality immediately suggests the idea of the independent, sovereign, national State, and of that peculiar emotion towards this kind of State which we call patriotism. In fact one might almost say that

freedom plus nationality equals the independent, national State in modern political psychology, and that this equation is intimately connected in communal psychology with the idea of external freedom, the ideal of the freedom of the national group to which one belongs from interference or control by another national group. Again the idea of nationality when connected with that of democracy immediately suggests the idea of the democratic, national State, in which the liberty and equality of the individual are assured. Here democracy plus nationality equals the democratic national State, with the stress in this equation on internal freedom, the freedom of the individual within the State from interference or control by another individual.

These ideas, in this vague form, certainly appeared to most people to be an adequate and legitimate cause for fighting. But it is remarkable that they are almost exactly the same ideas as those which, in the eighteenth century, seemed to be an adequate and legitimate cause of the French Revolution and the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. Not indeed exactly the same, but so close to one another that the man who meant to fight for freedom, nationality, and democracy would not mind very much if he found that, in fact, he had been fighting for liberty, equality, and fraternity. And here we have a fact which may well serve as the starting-point of our investigation. A strange fact, surely, that in that great social convulsion of the eighteenth century men should have felt themselves moved to fight for or against the ideas of liberty, equality, and fraternity, and that again, in the even greater convulsion of the twentieth, millions of men should feel themselves compelled to fight and die in the defence of or in opposition to the same ideas. When diseases like

INTRODUCTORY

plague and cholera cause widespread misery and death, we think them worth the most careful investigation. If historians, statesmen, and ordinary men are right in diagnosing their own political psychology, the death-rate from liberty and equality has been far higher in Europe during the last 150 years than that from cholera, and no disease can compete in destructiveness with the idea of nationality.

Seeing, then, that certain ideas in the communal psychology of the eighteenth century appeared to produce the French Revolution and the wars which followed it, and that once more in 1914 in the communal psychology of twentieth-century Europe the same ideas appear in a slightly different form to cause the war and the revolutions which followed it, the scientific investigator must start by comparing the communal psychology of the French Revolution with that of the early years of the twentieth century. He must enquire whether the superficial similarity between the political ideas is real or imaginary, and whether, in fact, these ideas did determine the events of which they are popularly assumed to have been causes. And he will hardly be able to complete his task satisfactorily unless he also examines to some extent the history of these ideas and of political communal psychology during the interval between the Napoleonic wars and the war of 1914, tracing the growth of these apparently powerful and destructive ideas and their effect upon particular events.

This is the task which I now propose to attempt, but before plunging into what must necessarily be a somewhat complicated mass of historical fact and theory it will be useful to set out the points upon which attention must be concentrated. The ideas of freedom, nationality, and democracy we have found to be, in the opinion of most people, intimately con-

connected with the war, and, superficially at least, they were, intimately connected with the internal and international upheavals of the French Revolution. These ideas form part of that matrix or mould in which, as was pointed out in a previous chapter, at a particular time and place the human community imposes its imprint upon the individual. We wish to examine the ideas more closely, to understand their meaning or meanings, to establish their place in the communal psychology of each period and their effect upon men's actions, to see whether they became ossified and fossilized or whether they have shown signs of growth and change. To do this we must, by means of analysis, compare them and their effects in the two periods and also during the hundred years and more that separated the two. But anyone who knows anything of the history of the years 1789 to 1914 can immediately point to certain manifestations of these ideas which are obviously of importance. We shall undoubtedly require to analyse not only freedom, nationality, and democracy, but also the ideas which lie behind imperialism, militarism, the State, internationalism, and pacifism.

One word of explanation should also be given. I am isolating in this part of the book the political ideas which are present in communal psychology and which appear, at first sight, to play a large part in causing wars and revolutions. I am not ignorant of nor do I mean to ignore the existence of economic ideas and economic facts. Whatever one may think of an economic interpretation of history, it is true that at most times, and certainly in the nineteenth century, you have only to scratch the surface of politics and you will find economics. But scientific truths, whether social or chemical, are reached only after a preliminary process of isolation and analysis.

INTRODUCTORY

It is pure superstition to believe that you can take a rapid survey of that intricate matrix which we call our civilization and make some sweeping economic (or political) generalization about it which will explain its manifestation in the war or the Russian Revolution. It is only by isolating and analysing such political ideas as freedom, nationality, and democracy, that you can discover exactly what part they play in determining events, and so their relation to economic ideas or facts. In this part of the book, then, though I shall not forget that economics are never far off in the background, I shall concentrate my attention on politics, reserving for another part an analysis of the economic contents of communal psychology.

CHAPTER II

1789

To understand the political matrix in the communal psychology of 1789, the mould into which, in that year, a man's political ideas unconsciously ran and hardened, one must attempt imaginatively to live oneself back into the atmosphere, the society, and the events which preceded the French Revolution, never forgetting at the same time the atmosphere, society, and events which preceded the war of 1914. As a starting point, I propose to recall to the reader the bare outline of the political structure of Europe at the two periods.

A man who, in 1880 or 1910, surveyed Europe as a political whole would inevitably have thought in terms of nations and states. I am an Englishman, he would have said, or a Frenchman, a German or an Italian or a Russian. A man might have said the same in 1780, but the implication would have been different. Behind the state and the nation, as they existed in the eighteenth century, loomed the figure of the monarch, not a symbol or a counter, but a solid figure, the corner-stone of the political structure. It was an age, perhaps one should say still an age, of great monarchs and emperors, great monarchies and empires. The Holy Roman Empire still existed, a gigantic shadow over central Europe. But

there was nothing shadowy about the empire of the Hapsburgs. If you were born in Vienna, Prague, Budapest, or Brussels, you were born a subject of Maria Teresa or Joseph II., and to be a subject of Maria Teresa of Austria in 1780 was a very different thing from being a subject of Francis Joseph of Austria in 1910.

In 1780 a Prussian was the subject of Frederick the Great, a Russian the subject of Catherine the Great, a Frenchman the subject of Louis XVI. These were absolute monarchs, ruling their territories and subjects autocratically. In London sat George III. of England, a characteristically English figure, ruling Englishmen, Scots, Welsh, Irish, and the considerable beginnings of an Empire in several continents. Neither a great king nor an absolute monarch in the continental sense, behind the veil of compromise and confusion in which the Briton instinctively wraps up his political and social system, George III. was much nearer to Catherine the Great of Russia than to George V. of England. And throughout the rest of Europe, except in the tiny republic of Switzerland, absolute monarchy, in various forms, was the accepted political machinery. In Spain, Portugal, Norway and Denmark, and Sweden it took the form of kingdoms in which we can recognize, more or less exactly, the outline of modern States. In Germany and Italy it remained in the hands of innumerable kinglings and princelings, already fossils and relics of history, which were only finally swept out of Europe after a century and a half and many wars and revolutions.

"I will have no innovations in my time," said George III., the least "absolute" of all the monarchs of the Great Powers of his time, shortly after he succeeded to the throne of England in 1760. When he

died, blind and a lunatic, but still on the throne of England, sixty years later, he had seen in his time and in Europe more innovations, more revolutionary changes in the position of kings and princes and in the political ideas which hedged a king, than he would have seen if he had lived through any previous sixty years of European history. That is a significant fact, for the autocrats who sat upon the other thrones of Europe, though many of them were "enlightened" and some of them apparently reformers, would all have said, with George III., "We will have no innovations in our time", so far as the powers and position of monarchy were concerned. "L'homme est toujours demeuré au même point," said Catherine the Great, the most enlightened of these enlightened despots, and when, in 1789, the French revolutionaries began to show that her words were not true, and, worse still, that kings and empresses might also not remain at the same point, her rage was terrible. "Je suis aristocrate, c'est mon métier," she burst out to the representative of the French people, and there was an end of it. "We will have no innovations in our time," said the kings and queens, the emperors and the empresses.

The innovations came in their time, and, though thrones and crowns bobbed up and down in the ebb and flow of 125 years, the innovations had left some deep marks on European monarchy in 1914. It is true that there were still thrones and crowns in practically every State, for only France and Portugal had joined Switzerland in becoming republics. But most of the monarchs of 1914 reigned without ruling. Almost everywhere there were constitutions, elected parliaments, cabinet ministers into whose hands had passed the political powers of Frederick the Great, Louis XVI., George III., Joseph II., and

Catherine the Great. In Russia there was still an autocrat, a silhouette Tsar from the eighteenth century, but even there one could distinguish the shadow of a constitution and the ghost of a parliament. In Germany there was a Kaiser talking incessantly and often acting like an autocrat, with one foot in the eighteenth century, trying to extricate the other from a nineteenth-century constitution and the feeble hands of a Reichstag. In Vienna there ruled an old man of 84, Francis Joseph I., Emperor of Austria, a Hapsburg, descendant of Rudolph of Hapsburg, Archduke of Austria and Emperor in 1273; for fifty-two years in the nineteenth century and fourteen years of the twentieth century this Hapsburg had ruled in Vienna, and, though the forms of the twentieth century could be seen in a constitution and a parliament, he still contrived, by means of an "Emergency Paragraph", racial confusion, and the Hapsburg Family Law, to rule like his eighteenth-century ancestors autocratically and dynastically.

These three monarchs, of Russia, Germany, and Austria-Hungary, were in 1914 the only monarchical survivors of the eighteenth century. In other European countries monarchs might survive but their monarchy had evaporated. Here was a real change that had taken place, and it was noted by Palmerston, himself a survivor from the eighteenth century, as early as 1849. When in that year the newly elected President of the Second Republic wanted to call a European Congress, Palmerston remarked that Europe had changed since the days of the great Congresses—in those days, he said, "nations counted for nothing, sovereigns submitted to the decisions of the Congress, and its resolves became easily law. But nowadays sovereigns count for little, and

POLITICAL COMMUNAL PSYCHOLOGY

nations will submit to no external dictation without the actual employment of force. . . ."¹

Between 1789 and 1914 a real change had taken place in the power of sovereigns and their position in communal psychology. But it would be a mistake to exaggerate it or, as most historians and political thinkers have done, assume that monarchy was no longer a serious element in political psychology or an active cause in political events. Royal marriages all through the nineteenth century were a disturbing element in international affairs and the relations of national States. In 1846 two such marriages ended the *entente cordiale* between France and England. The proposed elevation of a Hohenzollern prince to the Spanish throne started the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 and the death of a Hapsburg prince the great war of 1914. It is surely significant that as a result of the great war, the Romanovs, Hohenzollerns, and Hapsburgs lost their thrones and that republics were established in the majority of European States.

Historians and political philosophers have been so much occupied with the development of democracy and nationality in the nineteenth century that they have assumed the extinction or negligibility of monarchy. To do this distorts history and obscures passions and ideas which still play a great part in political psychology. Between 1789 and 1815 millions of persons died in an endeavour to settle the question whether kings were divine and their power absolute. By 1848 it was pretty certain that the question had been answered in the negative. But all questions with regard to the divinity and power of kings had not been settled. The few facts baldly stated above with regard to the nineteenth century and the war are all significant. It is significant that the war began

¹ Quoted by Philip Guedalla, *Palmerston*, p. 295.

between the three States, ruled by a Hapsburg, a Romanov, and a Hohenzollern, in which the vestiges of eighteenth-century monarchy and the divinity of kings were still considerable. It is significant that the war began as an attempt to make the world safe for kings and archdukes and ended in a holocaust of emperors, kings, princes, archdukes, and hereditary grand dukes. It is significant—to anyone calmly investigating political psychology—that the war began because someone shot the son of an emperor, while it is inconceivable that a European war could have begun in 1914 because someone shot the son of a miner or of a prime minister.

These facts are significant because they show that, although the position of monarchy had changed in the political matrix between 1789 and 1914, it was still an active and important element. And in the communal psychology, which is at once the result and cause of that matrix, it can also be observed as an active element. The philosophic historian will not ignore the fact that royal weddings, at the end of the nineteenth century, not only disturbed the relations of States, but were—as is proved by newspapers—a subject of intense interest to 99 per cent of the inhabitants of Europe. He will note the position of the Prince of Wales in the popular psychology and mythology and in the picture papers of 1926, and he will not forget that the years which saw the great driving out of kings also saw the triumphal entrance of a Lenin in Russia, a Mussolini in Italy, and a Rivera in Spain.

These facts and the part played by monarchy in the communal psychology of the twentieth century will require investigation, but I must return for the moment to the outline of the political structure of Europe at the two periods, 1789 and 1914. The

eighteenth-century sovereign was a powerful person, for he was the fountain head of political power. His powers were the result of privilege and his privilege the result of inheritance. His power and privilege and the country over which he ruled passed into his hands as a result of his birth; relics of feudalism, they were invested in men's minds with those attributes which to-day we associate unconsciously with "property". That was why the Frenchman was primarily a subject of Louis XVI. rather than a Frenchman, a German of Vienna a subject of Maria Teresa rather than a German. In the eighteenth century everyone, from God—"Dieu me pardonnera, c'est son métier"—down to the tiller of the soil, had his *métier*, his occupation. We have seen that, according to Catherine the Great, who was the most typical sovereign of her age, the occupation of a sovereign was to be an aristocrat. Immediately below the monarch was a small and well-defined class of persons, the aristocracy, and the monarch was himself an aristocrat, the chief aristocrat. The aristocracy had powers and privileges, feudal relics which were of the same nature as those of the sovereign; they were either inherited or devolved upon the possessor from someone who had inherited the power and privilege of devolving them.

As soon as one turns to the twentieth century one sees that the position of the aristocracy had changed even more than that of the sovereign. The change had affected both privilege and political power. In 1914 throughout the greater part of Europe most of the particular privileges of the aristocracy, from that of holding high political office to that of keeping pigeons, had been taken from them. An aristocrat in Britain, for instance, inherited real and personal property like anyone else; beyond that he inherited

little more than a title. Some aristocrats inherited a certain amount of political power in the House of Lords, but even this had been enormously curtailed, and was considered, possibly by a majority of people, to be an absurd relic of the eighteenth century.

We have here a difference in political structure and in communal psychology of some importance. In the twentieth century the inheritance of special privileges, such as that of not paying taxes or of keeping pigeons, and the inheritance of political power by a class of aristocrats were no longer important factors in the political structure and were widely condemned in communal psychology. Political power did not ordinarily devolve upon you because you were the son of your father or because someone who had given it to you was the son of his father; it devolved upon you either because you had induced large numbers of what was called the electorate to vote for you or because you had received it from someone else for whom large numbers of the electorate had voted.

The precise position of the aristocracy in the political structure of 1789 varied from country to country, according as the struggle for the lion's share of that power had favoured the king or his nobles. In France the king had won, and it was only Louis XVI.'s extraordinary incapacity for ruling at all which prevented him from ruling autocratically. The privileges of the French aristocracy were almost entirely non-political; they had such rights as those of dressing and undressing the king and queen, of obtaining court sinecures, of hunting, of pursuing the profession of opera singer without losing their other rights of nobility, of not paying certain taxes, and of assaulting with impunity those who had not been born noble. They had no right to a share in the government, though, as was but natural, a king

whose occupation it was to be an aristocrat, chose aristocrats like the Comte de Maurepas to be his chief ministers. In England, on the other hand, where there had already been a revolution, a restoration, and a second revolution, the struggle had favoured the aristocrats and landed gentlemen. When George III. came to the throne, political power was in their hands for they held the key positions in the machinery of government. It is true that George III. for a time succeeded in breaking their power, but he could only do so surreptitiously by an ingenious system of royal influence or corruption and through "the king's friends", who were themselves largely aristocrats. Indeed the position of the king and the aristocracy in England was exactly the opposite to that in France. In France the king held all the levers and handles which worked the machinery and the aristocracy could only get a share in the power behind the scenes by intrigue, influence, and corruption; in England the great families held the levers and handles and it was the king who had to work behind the scenes for his share by intrigue and corruption.

The importance of the idea of inheritance in the social psychology of the eighteenth century cannot be exaggerated. When Burke in 1790, listening with horror to the first mild mutterings of the nineteenth century in Paris, wrote an impassioned defence of the institutions and psychology of the eighteenth century, he pointed to the beauty and wisdom of a society founded upon birth and inheritance. The essential thing in monarchy, he said, is "the legal *hereditary* succession" of the crown, and it is this which the people of England look upon as "among their rights, not as among their wrongs; as a benefit, not as a grievance; as a security for their liberty, not

as a badge of servitude". Everything is inherited, whether it is the Crown or the liberties of the Crown's subjects, which are only "an *entailed inheritance* derived to us from our forefathers". "We have", he said, "an inheritable crown; an inheritable peerage; and a house of commons and a people inheriting privileges, franchises, and liberties, from a long line of ancestors."

The powers and privileges of the aristocracy were only part of this vast, all-pervading system of inheritance, "the result", according to Burke, "of profound reflection; or rather the happy effect of following nature, which is wisdom without reflection, and above it". Birth was either a road or an insurmountable bar to political power. Only one member of the Cabinet formed in 1783 was not in the House of Lords, and the exception was William Pitt, son of the Earl of Chatham. As late as 1827 Lord Grey opposed Canning on the ground that "he regarded the son of an actress as being *de facto* incapacitated from being premier of England".¹ This was not, as Mr. Temperley, the historian in the twentieth century, imagines, an "aristocratic prejudice", it was the natural attitude of the eighteenth century towards the powers and privileges of aristocratic birth. In *Humphry Clinker*, when a mere squire, having been insulted by Lord Oxmington, sends him a challenge by Lieutenant Lismahago,

Lord Oxmington was so confounded at this unexpected message, that he could not, for some time, make any articulate reply; but stood staring at the lieutenant with manifest marks of perturbation. At length, ringing a bell with great vehemence, he exclaimed, "What! a commoner send a challenge to a peer of the realm!—Privilege!

¹ Quoted in *The Foreign Policy of Canning*, by Harold Temperley, p. 31.

privilege!—Here's a person brings me a challenge from the Welshman that dined at my table—An impudent fellow!—My wine is not yet out of his head.

And in 1768, when common people had the impudence to demand that Lady Caithness should pay for goods supplied to her, the situation was described as follows by another Scottish aristocrat in a letter to his factor:¹

My Worthy Friend, My Lady Caithness is harassed in a most barbarous and inhumane way by a set of low lived Creatures, she has had the misfortune to have dealings with. Upon Saturday last her Ladyship's furniture was all sequestrated and carried away by one Pett an upholsterer, for a Debt due him.

In 1739, throughout Europe, political power was an inherited privilege. It was a valuable property belonging in varying proportions, according to the customs of the different countries, to kings, princes, aristocracy, and landed gentry, and handed down from father to son, with houses, land, money, and personal effects. Outside France very few people questioned the soundness or justice of this system. It was accepted by the ordinary man as a part of nature, like the waning of the moon or the fall of leaves in winter, for it was the matrix from which, since the day of his birth, his political and social ideas had received their stamp. When questioned—as it came to be questioned in France—it was defended, by Burke's philosophical defence, as the natural foundation for civilized society, "the result of profound reflection; or rather the happy effect of following nature, which is wisdom without reflection, and above it".

¹ James Hay to Wm. Rose, August 17, 1768. From *Lord Fife and his Factor*.

The political matrix of 1789 was a beautiful example of the dead hand in history. Burke was defending dead men's thoughts and the dispensations of the dead. For many years past, in England and France, the political matrix and the system and psychology which were shaped by it were out of harmony with and dislocated from the structure of society into which living men found that they had been born. The world was no longer composed of kings and nobles above, their subjects and serfs, undifferentiated, inarticulate, laborious workers of the hive, below. The dead hand of feudalism, the divine right of kings, and the inherited privilege of political power had met another hand which also moulds history, the hand of economics. Economics had already taken the common people, and had begun to divide them up into those "classes" which the industrialized world of the nineteenth century came to regard as the normal structure of society. This economic differentiation had already begun to affect the political system and, more deeply, the attitude towards that system of those who did not share by birth the privilege of power.

The classes, below the nobility and landed gentry, which began to assume importance in the eighteenth century, were a wealthy middle class, a middle middle class, a lower middle class, and an industrial, urban working class. The wealthy middle class consisted of large manufacturers, bankers, financiers, and merchants; the middle middle class of lawyers, civil servants, and the less wealthy business and professional men; the lower middle class of subordinate civil servants, clerks, shopkeepers, etc. Though the economic development of France and Britain in the eighteenth century was different, yet in both countries the rapid growth and marked differentia-

tion between these classes and sub-classes were the same. For instance, according to Burke there were not twelve bankers outside London in 1750, while in 1793 there were nearly 400.¹ In France the financier was not heard of before 1721, but after that date the financiers became a large and important class at the head of the bourgeoisie.²

In order to understand how Europe changed politically between 1789 and 1914 it is necessary to consider briefly the relation of these different, nascent classes, in England and France, at the waning of the eighteenth century, to the machinery of government which confers political power, and their attitude towards that relation. I say England and France, because, though the political psychology and system in these two countries has never been the same during that period, they were and remained the States most politically advanced in Europe and they set the pace in political development.

In England the hand of economics, in the shape of what is known as the Industrial Revolution, had already by the end of the eighteenth century had a profound effect upon the existence and circumstances and numbers of the middle and lower classes. It had increased the number and wealth of merchants, bankers, and financiers, and had given birth to a new class or sub-class, the wealthy, large-scale industrialists and mine-owners. At the other end, there was emerging from it a new class, recognized immediately by those above it to be savage and dangerous, the workers in mines and the urban workers in the new factories. Between these two extremes the vast nucleus or nebula of the bourgeoisie, the upper

¹ Macleod, *Theory and Practice of Banking*, i. 436; and Meredith, *Economic History of England*, p. 318.

² See M. Roustan, *The Pioneers of the French Revolution*, ch. v.

and lower middle classes, was evolving its hierarchy of worlds within worlds, professional, commercial, or shopkeeping. The hand of economics was, in fact, changing the simple, thinly peopled, static society, which retained the shape imposed upon it in field and village by feudalism, into the highly differentiated, populous, shifting society of industrialism.

The British Constitution made no provision whereby these classes could share in the privilege of political power. That power was shared between the king, the king's ministers, the House of Lords, and the House of Commons. The privilege of power, as exercised by the Crown, the Ministry, and the House of Lords, was inherited by the king and the aristocracy. There remained the House of Commons. The electoral system in the eighteenth century was such that the privilege of representation, of election to the House of Commons, was in fact inherited by the aristocracy and the landed gentry. The vast majority of seats was in the gift of particular families, and the families were either aristocratic or those of landed gentlemen. In the Parliament of 1701 Worcestershire, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, and Oxfordshire returned 36 members; of these 7 were peers or sons of peers, 5 were baronets, and 17 were landed gentlemen, a total of 29 out of 36 or 80.55 per cent. Of the 36 members returned for the same 4 counties in 1790, 12 were peers or sons of peers, 4 baronets, and 10 landed gentlemen, a total of 26 or 72.22 per cent.

As was noted in the second chapter of Part I., even slight changes in the established order may cause profound changes in the communal psychology, modify the structure of society, and alter the matrix which we call civilization. The passage from the established economic order of 1701 to that of 1800

was a revolution, and even in its first stages its effects can 'be observed upon the political structure of society. The dead hand is so tenacious and the resisting powers of human institutions are so tremendous that the political façade remained outwardly the same until 1832; but long before that the economic hand of the industrial revolution had begun to grapple with the dead hand of feudalism. The result was that the inheritance of the privilege of political power became tempered by corruption. The most powerful, *i.e.* the wealthiest, of the new unprivileged classes were naturally the first to establish a claim to a share in that power. Their newly acquired wealth was in part the cause, in part the opportunity of corruption. The practice of selling seats in Parliament to the highest bidder became more and more common, and the nabobs, the bankers, and the mine-owners were eager purchasers of the privilege to which they were barred by their birth. Lord Chesterfield, as early as 1767, when he wanted a seat for his son and offered £2500 for one, was told that "there was no such thing as a borough to be had now, for that the rich East and West Indians had secured them all at the rate of £3000 at least, but many at £4000, and two or three that he knew at £5000".¹ "For some years past", said the Earl of Chatham in 1770, "there has been an influx of wealth into this country which has been attended with many fatal consequences, because it has not been the regular, natural produce of labour and industry. The riches of Asia have been poured in upon us, and have brought with them not only Asiatic luxury, but, I fear, Asiatic principles of government. Without connections, without any natural interest in the soil, the importers of foreign gold have forced their way into

¹ *Letters to his Son*, December 19, 1767.

Parliament by such a torrent of private corruption as no hereditary fortune could resist."¹

When I was looking through the records of parliamentary representation in order to see what the class complexion of the House of Commons was in the eighteenth century, I came across some remarkable cases in which you could see the hand of economics suddenly stretch out from London or from a mining or industrial centre and grapple with the dead hand of feudalism in some West Country borough or village. Take Worcestershire for instance. From 1701 on, year after year, for Worcester county and Worcester town, for Droitwich, Evesham, and Bewdley, with monotonous regularity you find the names of a few great aristocratic or landed families again and again upon the register: the Packingtons, the Foleys, the Rushouts, the Winningtons, the Lygons, and the Lytteltons. And suddenly, in this unbroken succession, you read that in 1790 there appeared as a candidate in the ancient borough of Evesham Mr. T. Thompson, of whom a contemporary notes that he "was the son of a rich Jew on 'change". What name Mr. Thompson's father assumed, when he was merely the Jew on 'change, is perhaps not beyond all conjecture; the appearance of his son as one of the two members for Evesham in the Parliament of 1790—the other member was Sir John Rushout, Bart., whose father, Sir John Rushout, Bart., had been member in 1701—shows the system of inherited privilege becoming tempered by corruption.

The extent to which this process had taken place between 1701 and 1790 is reflected in the figures given above of the number of aristocrats and landed

¹ *Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 405. See Lecky, *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. iii. p. 171.

POLITICAL COMMUNAL PSYCHOLOGY

gentlemen returned for Parliament in those two years. But the process becomes still clearer if the following figures are examined; they show the classes to which the members returned in 1701, 1790, and 1924 for the counties of Worcestershire, Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, and Herefordshire belonged:

	1701.	1790.	1924.
Peers or sons of peers	7	12	0
Baronets . . .	5	4	0
Landed gentry . . .	17	10	6
	29 = 80.55%	26 = 72.22%	6 = 28.56%
Merchants, owners, or minc- facturers . . .	5	5	5
Bankers . . .	0	2	2
Lawyers . . .	2	3	3
	7 = 19.45%	10 = 27.78%	10 = 47.62%
Labour . . .	0	0	2 = 9.52%
Unclassified . . .	0	0	3 = 14.3%
Total returned	36	36	21

It will be seen that at the time of the French Revolution the only classes who directly shared in political power in Britain were the king, aristocracy, landed gentry, and the financial, commercial, mine-owning, and manufacturing classes. Political power was in the main an inherited prerogative, but already the first attack had been successfully made upon it by wealth—great wealth—acquired by financiers, nabobs, and the new industrialists. The middle classes and the lower orders,¹ as they were coming to be

¹ "Writing towards the end of the ancient régime, Cobbett maintained that in his own lifetime the tone and language of society had changed very greatly for the worse, that the old name of the commons

called, had nothing to do with the making of laws or with the control of the machinery of government. They had, no doubt, their place within the Constitution, but it was a place bare of power. Such influence as they possessed was exerted from without the Constitution unconstitutionally. We have seen that the system by which political power was an inherited privilege of the aristocracy had, during the eighteenth century, become tempered by corruption; it had also become tempered by riot. Corruption was the instrument through which the rising middle class, riot the instrument through which the downtrodden lower orders, attempted to take a hand in government. Nothing is more significant in the political history of Britain in the years preceding the French Revolution than the growth of "lawlessness", the most famous examples of which were the riots connected with Wilkes and the Middlesex election of 1768, the riots of 1771 connected with the proceedings against the printers who had reported Parliamentary debates, and the most famous of all, the Gordon Riots of 1780. Historians, I think, have not given to these extraordinary outbreaks quite the importance which they deserve as symptoms and effects of a pathological condition in communal psychology. Mob violence and rioting are always latent in large cities; when they actually break out, they appear so horribly and erratically irrational that they are dismissed by historians and philosophers almost as evidence of original sin in the "lower orders", the beast lying in the heart of democracy. Criminals, the "dregs of the populace", and what we now call hooligans are always conspicuous as rioters, and it is

of England' had given way to such names as 'the lower orders', 'the peasantry', and 'the population'. . . ." Hammond, *The Village Labourer, 1760-1832*.

POLITICAL COMMUNAL PSYCHOLOGY

natural to regard their momentary ascendancy as evidence of weakness above rather than of something abnormally wrong below. The mob has usually played a leading and sinister part in the great revolutions, and is the traditional bogey which terrifies and fortifies the conservative, the reactionary, the upholder of "law and order", the patriot, and the anti-bolshevik. In their political philosophy mob rule and anarchy are always lying just below the surface of modern civilization and are only prevented from rising above it by a strong Government, an efficient police force, and a "loyal" army.

If this view be correct it is a curious fact that the three great outbreaks of 1768, 1771, and 1780 should all have originated as protests against political acts of the Government and governing classes. In the first two, the questions involved were those which have for long been accepted as vital to liberty and democracy. In 1768 Wilkes was in prison, although the Courts had held that the King and his Government had arrested him illegally, seized his papers illegally, and outlawed him illegally. The Middlesex election showed that the people were on the side of Wilkes and against the Government, and the riots grew out of the election and his popularity. In 1771 the question which gave rise to the disorders was not one which, *prima facie*, might be expected to rouse the passions of the criminal and hooligan classes. It was concerned with the freedom of the Press, the liberty of papers to report and comment upon parliamentary debates, and the right of the King and House of Commons to interfere with and overrule the judiciary. The facts are worth recalling. The House of Commons had ordered the arrest of two printers for reporting debates and, incidentally, for referring to one of the debaters, Colonel George Onslow, M.P.,

as "little cocking George" and "that paltry, insignificant insect". When the Sergeant-at-Arms failed to arrest the offenders, the King came to the rescue with a royal proclamation offering a reward for their capture. Proceedings against six other printers followed almost immediately. These proceedings were extremely arbitrary, if not illegal; they were resisted by the City authorities, including Wilkes and the Lord Mayor. When a messenger of the House attempted to arrest one of the offending printers, the printer had the messenger arrested by a constable and brought before the Lord Mayor at the Mansion House. The Lord Mayor and Wilkes, as alderman, tried the case and held that the attempt of the messenger to arrest the printer within the jurisdiction of the City, on a warrant not countersigned by a City magistrate, was illegal; they discharged the printer and committed the messenger. The decision was certainly correct; the subsequent action of the House of Commons in calling for the Lord Mayor's Minutes and expunging the record of these judicial proceedings was, as Junius put it, "mere violence and without the shadow of right". The Government, the King, and the majority in the House were, however, at the moment prepared to go to any extreme, as was shown by the fact that the Lord Mayor was committed to the Tower and detained there for six weeks.

Strong opposition was maintained by Chatham and the Opposition to the action of the Government and House during this struggle. "The country" showed that it was on the side of the printers and the Lord Mayor in the only way then open to it—by a flood of addresses. The London mob by invading the House of Commons, hissing King George in the streets, very nearly killing Lord North, and violent rioting also declared its sympathies. The sympathy

is a material point; it cannot be dismissed as a mere excuse for hooliganism. What started the disorder was no chance incident, but, as in 1768, definitely a political question, one might almost say an idea. The action of the Government, the King, and the House of Commons was only a somewhat drastic assertion of the system and principle, then by law established, and a few years later to be defended in masterpieces of oratory and English prose by Burke—the principle that political power is an inherited privilege and that those outside the privileged classes have no concern with that power and have no right to knowledge of how it is exercised. The rioters may have all been criminals and hooligans, interested in pillage and arson rather than in the science and philosophy of politics, but none the less they belonged to those unprivileged classes who were debarred by the system and principle from any share in political power. They pulled Lord North out of his barouche or surged into the lobbies of the House of Commons, because, dimly, ~~they~~ they objected to the system, and because the only way left to them by the system itself of expressing their objection was physical intimidation of the privileged classes.

In 1768 and 1771 the rioters were on the side of what may be called liberty—at anyrate the outbreak of 1771, in fact, ended in the establishment of the liberty of the Press to report the doings of Parliament. The Gordon Riots of 1780 were against liberty. But from the point of view of communal psychology, in one aspect, the difference is unimportant. The Relief Bill was a mild enough measure, which repealed a law making a Roman Catholic who kept a school liable to penal servitude for life. That it passed both Houses of Parliament without a division is clear evidence that Catholic Relief commended itself to the

governing and privileged classes. The Bill was essentially the act of those classes; but, as events proved, it was fanatically opposed by large numbers of the unenfranchised and unprivileged classes. The riots in London, which, for four June days, kept the city without any government in the hands of a raging mob, were not an isolated act of hooliganism. The disorders began in Edinburgh and Glasgow; when they spread to the south they affected Hull and Bath and Bristol as well as London. "Making every allowance for the amount of ordinary crime which entered into them," says Lecky, "and considering how infinitesimal was the provocation that produced them, they display a depth and intensity of fanaticism we should scarcely have expected in the eighteenth century." To contemporaries the depth and intensity of feeling were just as astonishing as, and much more terrifying than, they were to the nineteenth-century historian, and the astonishment, in both cases, was in part due to a misunderstanding of communal psychology. The traditional mistrust of Roman Catholics and a hatred of Popery were widespread among the middle classes and lower orders in 1778, when Sir George Saville's Relief Bill was passed. But the people who held these political and religious beliefs, which were closely connected with the most inflammable emotions, were given no power or right by the British Constitution to express them. The Gordon Riots become less astonishing when one reflects that the only way in which the unprivileged classes in 1780 could show that they were violently opposed to a political measure was by physical violence.

Madame du Deffand, sitting in Paris in 1780, a bare decade before a much more terrible Parisian riot was to overwhelm the society to which she

belonged, writing to Horace Walpole, was moved to remark: "Rien n'est plus affreux que tout ce qui arrive chez vous. Votre liberté ne me séduit point. Cette liberté tant vantée me paraît bien plus onéreuse que notre esclavage." And Walpole himself, who had with the Duchess and her daughters watched London in flames from the top of Gloucester House, when the danger was all but over and he had retired to Strawberry Hill to recover from the strain, on June 12, reflects in a letter to the Earl of Strafford:

The Town and Parks are now one camp—the next disagreeable sight to the capital being in ashes. It will still not have been a fatal tragedy, if it brings the nation *one* and all to their senses. It will still be not quite an unhappy country, if we reflect that the old constitution, exactly as it was in the last reign, was the most desirable of any in the universe. It made us *then* the first people in Europe—we have a vast deal of ground to recover—but can we take a better path than that which King William pointed out to us? I mean the system he left us at the Revolution. I am averse to *all* changes of it—it fitted us just as it was.

It was not only the eighteenth-century queens and kings, emperors and empresses who said: "We will have no innovations in our time". Here in Paris in 1780—only nine years before the great cataclysm—is Madame du Deffand, who was a friend of Voltaire, convinced that English riots are the result of English liberty, and congratulating herself that she lived in France, where no such innovation as liberty had appeared. It is true that Madame du Deffand belonged physically and spiritually to a past which, even in the Paris of 1780, was dead, but it was the psychology of Madame du Deffand and her dead past, not that of Voltaire and the *philosophes*, which still governed France. It was only three years before the Gordon Riots that she had been able to say: "The dismissal

of Turgot pleases me very much; everything seems to me to be going very well"—a sympathetic, contemporary comment upon an event which, the historians tell us, "made the French Revolution inevitable".

And there at Strawberry Hill the cultured Walpole, the son of a great Prime Minister, with the roar of an all but revolutionary mob still in his ears, uneasily aware that there must be something wrong somewhere below the surface, can think of nothing better to say to the Earl of Strafford than that all would be well if we went back to 1688—murmuring, with George III. and Catherine the Great and Madame du Deffand: "We will have no innovations in our time". The mob which set fire to the Fleet Prison and drank itself to death in Holborn was, no doubt, not thinking of political liberty or innovations; the mob which shouted for Wilkes and liberty may not have been thinking of a Reform Bill; and the mob which tried to tear Lord North to pieces may not have been thinking of the liberty of the Press. Nevertheless it is also true that none of these outbreaks occurred over the price of bread, the economics of wages, or the matrimonial affairs of monarchy. They were obscurely political, and it was as such that they impressed and oppressed contemporaries like Burke, who saw in them intimations of worse things to come, arguments for an ever more rigid conservatism, and horrible warnings against the spread of liberty or the extension of the franchise.

The historian, surveying history panoramically from the vantage ground of a century and a half above the events, can see that there was some cause for Burke's uneasiness. The London riots of George III.'s reign were significant of something new in communal psychology, not confined to England. The Empress of Austria, Maria Theresa, writing to her

daughter, the Queen of France, Marie Antoinette, on June 2, 1775, about the disorders with regard to the *parlement* which had occurred at Paris, remarked that in her opinion there was "something underneath it all". The language which the Queen of France had just heard from the people of Paris, she said, is the same as the Empress has just heard from "our people in Bohemia, with the only difference that while yours were concerned with the price of bread, ours were concerned with the *corvées*. They also pretended that there was a law abolishing the *corvées*. In fact, this spirit of revolt (*cet esprit de mutinerie*) begins to become common everywhere; well, it is the result of our age of enlightenment!" Thus contemporaries, from Burke in London to Marie Antoinette in Paris and her mother in Bohemia, who were not biased *ex post facto* by the unborn events of the French Revolution, felt instinctively that in these blind disorders there was "something underneath it all", something obscurely connected with the philosophical enlightenment for which they had the same aversion as for the violence of riotous mobs. It may be noted, too, that the reaction of the Empress of Austria to this something new below the surface of communal psychology, now breaking out above the surface in violent objection to dear bread, *corvées*, the imprisonment of printers, or religious toleration, was exactly similar to that of Madame du Deffand in Paris and Horace Walpole in Twickenham. She was enchanted, she told her daughter, to hear of the "firmness" which the King and *des ordres* had shown in Paris. "We will have no innovations in our time", repeated the governing and privileged classes of Europe.

It may be argued that I am making too much of these three London riots, but I do not think that this

is so. They are unique in London history, both in their political origin and in their extreme violence. The privileged classes were amazed and profoundly impressed by them. There was something, they felt, underneath it all. That something was in reality a pathological condition of the communal psychology. The society of men and women regimented into new classes which had come into existence by 1780 could no longer safely and without protest be moulded in the ancient political matrix which made political power an inherited privilege. The protest in London was blind, vague, politically unconscious, irrational, uncivilized, and undirected; nevertheless it was an instinctive political blow struck suddenly and in the dark by the politically unprivileged. For the first time in England the voice of the modern "lower orders" demanded—in the only way left to it under the Constitution—to be heard on political questions.

• The riots of 1770 to 1780 were never repeated in this country, and in the world of the later nineteenth century they would have been inconceivable. Not that "disturbances" and the menace of a mob were unknown between the June Gordon Riots and that July day of 1866 when the Victorian world was horrified to see the railings of Hyde Park and some of the last barriers against political democracy swept away by the vast crowd which had assembled under the auspices of Mr. Beales and the Reform League. But after 1780 political disturbances were always, as in the case of Chartism, politically conscious and directed. The change is of the greatest significance, because it points to a profound difference in the political communal psychologies of 1789 and 1914.

In the unreformed Parliament before 1832 the middle and working classes had no representation;

they also had no power of electing representatives. Between 1760 and 1832 about one half of the members of the House of Commons owed their seats to patrons,¹ who belonged to the great aristocratic or landed families, and had been given their seats on the understanding that they acted as representatives of their patrons. Of the other half the majority were themselves aristocrats or landed gentlemen who owned or controlled seats. The buying of a seat, said Sir Samuel Romilly, a Parliamentary reformer, in 1807,² "is almost the only way in which one in my situation, who is resolved to be an independent man, can get into Parliament. To come in by popular election in the present state of representation is quite impossible. To be placed there by some great lord, and to vote as he shall direct, is to be in a state of complete dependence; and nothing hardly remains but to owe a seat to a sacrifice of a part of one's fortune." Yet there is no evidence that, before the French Revolution, there was any sustained and conscious demand for the franchise or representation among the middle and working classes. There was sporadic discontent with the franchise, particularly in the large and growing towns; when the Government were more than usually incompetent and unpopular, as during the American War, this discontent crystallized into a real demand for reform. But the demand was never sustained by any widespread feeling that the system of privilege and inheritance was wrong and that all classes should have some share in political power. Nothing, from this point of view, is more significant than the curious fact that popular interest, which was very marked in 1783 when Pitt brought in his Reform resolutions, had

¹ *The Unreformed House of Commons*, by Edward Porritt, vol. i. p. 311.

² Porritt, *op. cit.* vol. i. p. 360.

completely evaporated when he introduced his Reform Bill in 1785.

In June 1927 a Conservative Government suddenly announced that they would introduce and pass, without a reference to the electorate, a Bill which would perpetuate the political power of the hereditary peers in the House of Lords and which would alter the Constitution so that it would for ever be impossible to change the structure or powers of that Chamber without its consent. Within a week of this announcement, Mr. J. L. Garvin, a Conservative and the editor of a Conservative paper, wrote as follows:

In the self-governing Dominions, as in the United States—in emancipated Germany, as in France and Italy—the principle of hereditary legislation is unknown and would not be tolerated. Because of this obsolete, irrational anomaly, we alone—we who led the world so long by the first famous example of Constitutionalism—have no more any reasoned and stable Constitution at all. Upon the Government's lines we never can have one. Again, as in 1911, the hereditary Peers, instead of being content with the immense social distinction belonging to their rank, are sacrificing the vital interests of their land to an indefensible and untenable form of personal privilege.¹

Mr. Garvin's outlook and phraseology magnificently illuminate the difference in the political communal psychologies of 1789 and 1914. Though a Conservative and the supporter of a Conservative Government, the mere *idea* of inherited political power presents itself to him immediately as "an indefensible and untenable form of personal privilege". It is doubtful whether there were ten men in England in 1789 who would have agreed with Mr. Garvin. So far were the middle classes generally from holding

¹ The *Observer*, Sunday, June 16, 1927.

inherited political power to be an indefensible and untenable form of personal privilege that they were not responsive to the idea of claiming some share in political power or even in choosing those who were to exercise political power. What was true of the middle classes was even more true of the working classes. There is no evidence at all that before 1789 the "lower orders" ever questioned the principles of privilege and inheritance or the position of complete political powerlessness given to them by the Constitution. The political psychology of those classes has been so admirably and authoritatively described by Mr. and Mrs. J. L. Hammond that I propose to quote their words:¹

When the French Revolution broke out there was no resemblance between the spirit of the working classes in the north and Midlands, and the spirit of the Paris democrat, on fire with vivid and emancipating enthusiasms. The English working classes in the centres of the new industry were conservative, insular, Philistine. Manchester, like Birmingham, was predominantly Church and King; and nobody who reads Bamford's description of the treatment his father and father's friends received at Middleton will make the mistake of supposing that the Reformers whom Pitt persecuted were dangerous to the State by reason of their popularity. The working classes, as a body, in the North and Midlands were profoundly indifferent to ideas or causes. So long as they could drink, watch a cock-fight, or bull-baiting or horse-race, and earn a reasonable living, they were as contented as the squires whose tastes, if rather more expensive, were in kind not dissimilar. No visions exalted or disturbed their souls, and the *sansculottes* of Bolton or Wigan were as ready as the parsons or the squires to put anybody who talked or looked like a French Jacobin into the nearest or the darkest horsepond.

¹ J. L. and Barbara Hammond, *The Town Labourer, 1760-1832*, p. 288.

If the analysis in Part I. is correct, political action and the ebb and flow in the political life of a community are determined by the relation between the political matrix and the ideas, beliefs, and desires of individuals. Already my brief analysis of the political matrix and the communal psychology of England immediately before the French Revolution and immediately before the war of 1914 has revealed some important facts. I propose here to stop for a moment and summarize the position to which I conceive the analysis to have brought me.

What may be termed the material political matrix the political framework of the Constitution and laws and customs—was in the eighteenth century a structure based upon inheritance and privilege. Politics was a part of economics and political power was only one and a peculiar form of personal property, governed by its own laws of inheritance and, of course, sanctified by all “the sacred rights of property”. The sacred rights in this particular form of property belonged exclusively to the monarch, the aristocracy, and the landed gentry. Economically their attitude towards their property—from which many made large incomes through the sale of Parliamentary boroughs owned by them—was the same as that of the owner of a public-house to-day who is threatened by Prohibition or Local Option. From Lord North in 1776 to William IV. in 1832, many of them held that the owner of a pocket borough, threatened by Reform, was entitled to monetary compensation.¹

Between 1789 and 1914 the material matrix had been all but completely revolutionized. In the twentieth century the king inherited a throne, but practically no political power; constitutionally the landed

¹ Porritt, *The Unreformed House of Commons*, vol. i. p. 81.

gentleman inherited no political property or privilege. Vestiges of the old eighteenth-century matrix continued to exist only in the House of Lords, and there in an emasculated form. Political power had ceased to be a form of property or inheritable privilege; the right to vote for a representative who should exercise that power belonged to all the individuals of any class who satisfied certain requirements as to sex, age, etc. But even greater changes had taken place in the communal psychology which is at once a part of the matrix and one of the elements which make for its revolution and dissolution. We have seen a Conservative to-day talking of the principle of hereditary legislation as an anachronism and "an indefensible and untenable form of personal privilege". Here is a political idea observable within the mind of Mr. Garvin, an intellectual conviction unconnected with personal interest or aims or desires; and there is, I think, no doubt at all that this belief, springing primarily from the intellect, has determined or at least affected his political action. Mr. Garvin opposed the proposals of the Government, normally supported by him, *because* he held this belief that inherited political power is an indefensible and untenable form of personal privilege. And there are hundreds of thousands of persons in Great Britain to-day whose political psychology is exactly the same as Mr. Garvin's on this question. They share his belief and would act on that belief in the same way.

In the eighteenth century the system of inherited privilege, so vehemently rejected by Mr. Garvin and nine-tenths of the population to-day, not only existed, but was accepted. But the acceptance by that generation was psychologically different from our rejection. The rejection is, in the case of a very large number of persons, a conscious, even a reasoned,

political belief, capable at any moment of affecting their actions. The twentieth-century man in the street is so far a politically conscious animal. The vast majority of the eighteenth-century men in the street were not in this way politically conscious. They accepted the system, the political matrix, of their age, but they accepted it passively, as a sheep accepts the shape of the field in which it crops the grass and the form of fence which prevents it from getting into the clover. This passivity and political unconsciousness were recognized as of the greatest importance by those who were politically conscious and wished to keep the fields and fences, the properties and privileges, unchanged. The view of large numbers of the privileged classes was expressed with great clearness in the House of Commons in 1807 by Davies Giddy, President of the Royal Society, when he opposed a Bill for introducing elementary schools in England:¹

However specious [he said] in theory the project might be, of giving education to the labouring classes of the poor, it would in effect be found to be prejudicial to their morals and happiness; it would teach them to despise their lot in life, instead of making them good servants of agriculture, and other laborious employments to which their rank in society had destined them; instead of teaching them subordination, it would render them factious and refractory, as was evident in the manufacturing counties; it would enable them to read seditious pamphlets, vicious books, and publications against Christianity; it would render them insolent to their superiors; and in a few years the result would be that the legislature would find it necessary to direct the strong arm of power towards them, and to furnish the executive magistrate with much more vigorous laws than were now in force.

This preliminary survey of the political insides of

¹ J. L. and Barbara Hammond, *The Town Labourer, 1760-1832*, p. 57.

men's minds and of the political matrix in the Britain of 1789, as compared with the Britain of 1914, has revealed a curious picture, and one which my reading of the ordinary historians and histories of political ideas would never have led me to expect. It will be noticed that I have hardly ever had to use the words "liberty", "equality", or "democracy", words representing political ideas which, according to historians, have been most intimately connected with the change from the political system of the eighteenth century to the political system of the twentieth. This is partly due to the fact that during the eighteenth century, before 1789, in Britain (though not in France, as we shall presently see) political ideas hardly existed and were never operative.¹ A desire for gin or arson or a blind feeling that one is unjustly treated and impotent will suffice to make anyone an efficient rioter, and a man may be a good Tory with nothing in his head but passionate interest in the royal family and respect for the squire. But to be a democrat you must have within your head, if only in its vaguest form, the idea of democracy, a highly complicated political idea which is itself intimately connected with other complicated political ideas like rights, liberty, and equality. It is true that you have only to scratch the surface of the brain of the twentieth-century man in the street and you will find the word "democracy" there. But that is not true of the eighteenth century. You might have searched from the surface to the inmost recesses of most Englishmen's brains in 1789 without finding any political idea at all. You would have found economic ideas, religious, social, even philosophical ideas, but not

¹ There was, however, a gradual general change in communal psychology in England between 1720 and 1789 which prepared the ground for the revolutionary ideas of 1789, see below, pp. 130 and 136.

political ideas. It required the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, with Godwin, Tom Paine, and Cobbett to turn the eighteenth-century Englishman into a political animal.

But there is another and a more profound and subtle reason why the ideas of liberty, equality, and democracy have played so small a part in our discussion of the political matrix of the eighteenth century. Democracy is not the antithesis of the English eighteenth-century political system, but is a growth from its destruction. The Englishman in 1750 was not a political animal, because, in a dim way, he regarded the framework of politics as determined by God and economics rather than as parts of a political system. Political power was only one kind of inheritable property, and the laws by which it was inherited had been fixed by God. To one living with these ideas within the system itself, an attempt to alter it did not raise questions of political liberty and equality or the balance of political power; it appeared to be an attack upon religion and the sacred rights of property and the divinely established foundations of human society. Even Burke, who of all pre-revolutionary British writers was the most politically profound, in his defence of the system never really discussed it from the point of view of liberty or democracy, or of what to-day we mean by "politics". He could not do so, because he held that the two principles upon which civilization in Europe has depended for ages are "the spirit of a gentleman and the spirit of religion", that these two principles can only be maintained by an immutable and all-pervading system of inheritance, that even liberty is only "an entailed inheritance", and presumably, therefore, that a person who has not inherited liberty can never have or acquire a right to it.

If one turns from the political matrix of eighteenth-century Britain to that of eighteenth-century France, one finds considerable resemblances, but even greater differences. Political power was, as in Britain, inheritable property, but it was inheritable primarily by the king alone. During the reigns of Louis XIV. and Louis XV. the monarchy had become absolute; all powers of legislation and nearly all administrative and judicial power vested in the monarch. The aristocracy and landed gentry inherited social, economic, and, to some extent, administrative and judicial privileges, but no effective political power. There was no House of Lords, and there was no House of Commons through which the feudal system and the system of inheritance could be modified by corruption, venality, or reform. But this political framework of institutions, the relics of an age which had passed away, no longer fitted the society and communal psychology which had developed during the eighteenth century. The hand of economics was never laid upon the life of France with such suddenness and violence as it was upon that of England; nevertheless, between 1650 and 1789 there was a gradual evolution of a new bourgeoisie and a new working class. The middle classes increased in numbers and some of them in wealth; the town workers also increased in numbers and developed in organization and "class-consciousness"; the status of the agricultural labourer tended to change from that of serfdom to that of peasant proprietorship. All these classes belonged, politically, socially, and economically, to the unprivileged orders, and all, as we shall presently see, were influenced intellectually by the "age of enlightenment".

Thus for many years before 1789 there was in France the same kind of latent dislocation and dis-

harmony between the political framework of society and the economic development of classes as there was in England. In the French system the dislocation was more vital and intractable, and its effects, therefore, more obvious. The inheritance of political power in Britain was shared between the monarch, the aristocracy, and the landed gentry, and there was never an impassable gulf between the upper and the middle classes.¹ The House of Commons, though in fact an instrument of privilege and inheritance, maintained a façade of popular government, and there were always constituencies in which members could not afford to ignore the opinions of the electorate. Finally, the privileged classes realized that there was in the background the possibility of a reform of the franchise which must inevitably revolutionize the whole political system. But in France the feudal system of government had not been tempered or mitigated by any such checks, adjustments, or compromises. Political power was centralized in the monarchy. The king did not share the privilege of power with aristocracy, landed gentry, or middle classes. There was no Chamber through which the Government could be checked, guided, or modified, for the States-General never met, the Provincial Chambers had fallen into decay, even the Parlements had been broken during the reign of Louis XV. That king, in a reply to the Parlement de Paris in 1766, correctly defined the position of the king in the French political matrix before the Revolution:

¹ This fact was often used to encourage belief in the useful fiction, carefully cultivated and preserved until comparatively recent times, that there were no separate class-interests in Great Britain! Even Lecky could write *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. i. p. 172: "In England the interests of the nobles as a class have been carefully and indissolubly interwoven with those of the people".

C'est en ma personne seul que réside l'autorité souveraine. . . . C'est à moi seul qu'appartient le pouvoir législatif sans dépendance et sans partage. L'ordre public tout entier émane de moi; j'en suis le gardien suprême. Mon peuple n'est qu'un avec moi; les droits et les intérêts de la nation, dont on ose faire un corps séparé du monarque, sont nécessairement unis avec les miens et ne reposent qu'entre mes mains.¹

The French monarchy not only ruled absolutely; it ruled incompetently, and its incompetence was most energetic in the fatal spheres of finance and economics. Louis XIV. by his ruinous wars began to pave a road which led Louis XVI. to the guillotine. Louis XV. was a man who was eternally bored, but nothing bored him so much as the business of kingship. Of feeble intellectual gifts, he found nothing in the world really to interest him, and he spent the greater part of his life perpetually wandering round and round in a narrow circle from country-seat to country-seat, accompanied by a vast court retinue, vainly seeking relief from his incurable *ennui*.² Only two occupations (to which our ancestors applied the same name, *venery*), hunting and sexual indulgence, afforded him temporary distraction, and to these he applied himself with the amount of assiduity of which he was capable. This was the man who told the Parlement that "to me alone belongs the power of making laws, absolutely and autocratically. Public order derives entirely from me." He acted up to his statement, and he rarely roused himself to action unless it was to thwart such efforts as his subjects made to mitigate the misgovernment. Under his rule

¹ Taine, *L'Ancien Régime*, p. 6.

² Pidansat de Mairobet in *L'Observateur Hollandais*, quoted by M. Roustan, *The Pioneers of the French Revolution*, English translation, p. 36.

the financial and economic condition of France degenerated hopelessly.

He was succeeded by Louis XVI., a man of excellent intentions, but completely incapable of transacting any business requiring decision, judgment, understanding, or intelligence. The picture of him as a youth drawn for us by le Comte de Mercy-Argenteau, not a hostile witness, in his letters to Maria Theresa, reveals an abnormally stunted and dulled intellect combined with lack of virility. He was incapable of any intellectual interest and even of ordinary conversation. His one passion seemed to the aristocratic Austrian Count distressing and inexplicable; it was for manual labour, "pour tout ce qui est ouvrage de batiments, comme maçonnerie, menuiserie et autres de ce genre". He liked to work with workmen at moving heavy beams and paving stones, and would return from "this wretched exercise" tired and dirty, to the annoyance of Marie Antoinette and the astonishment of Mercy.¹ In later years, as is well known, he devoted his attention to clock-making. Almost incapable of and always uninterested in sexual intercourse, even when a duty, he gave all his energies to the other form of venery, and after his death practically the only record which he left of his existence was a hunting diary in which are baldly enumerated the enormous number of animals killed by him. Louis XVI. was not exactly imbecile, but to-day in any ordinary walk of life he would be considered on the border-line of feeble-mindedness.

Upon this unfortunate man rested the entire responsibility for the government of France at a time when its finances were in desperate disorder and the whole administrative, economic, and social system of

¹ See Arneth, *Correspondance secrète entre Marie-Thérèse et le Comte de Mercy-Argenteau*, vol. ii. p. 10.

the country required immediate and intelligent reform. He shared his responsibility and his power only with his wife, Marie Antoinette; a young woman of considerable personal charm, but ignorant and uneducated; untrained for and incapable of applying her mind to any serious subject; vain, self-willed, extravagant, and bored by anything which was unconnected with her own position, social functions, etiquette, and amusements, or gambling. The more one studies history, the more astonishing does it seem that man, who is after all a rational animal, should have invented and passionately maintained the fantastic political institutions and political beliefs which have existed in all ages and have frequently been the cause of some of the worst of human catastrophes. But there is no period of history in which the political antics of the human mind seem to the impartial and dispassionate observer more grotesque and inexplicable than that in which France drifted helplessly into the Revolution. It was an age of progress, of intelligence and reason and culture, of good will and good intentions, an age in which political thought itself was formed or dominated by Montesquieu, Voltaire, and the Encyclopaedists, Rousseau. For fifty years it had been widely recognized, not merely by men of "advanced" views, that catastrophe could hardly be avoided unless there were political reforms affecting in particular the administration and the finances of the State, and to some extent the whole economic and social system of the country. Yet all, through those years the political system through which alone the reforms could be instituted remained of such childish absurdity that not even the ordinary business of government could be carried on with average incompetence.

The whole government and the possibility of re-

form depended ultimately upon the judgment and decision of the young man and young woman whose characters, capacities, and interests have been described above. They were surrounded and separated from the rest of the nation by their Court, composed of a comparatively small number of aristocratic families. The French aristocracy were landowners, with various economic and social privileges, but with no political or social responsibilities. The time of those who formed the immediate entourage of the king and queen was occupied entirely by the elaborate rituals and ceremonies of etiquette for which the French Court was famous, by hunting and social amusements, and by an even more elaborate ritual and ceremony of perpetual intrigue. This intrigue was of political and historical importance, for it contributed directly to the bankruptcy and misgovernment of France. What we should now call the revenue was, of course, absolutely at the disposal of the king. A considerable part of it was wasted by the incredible extravagance of the royal establishments. The scale of expenditure in a Court where the queen had three hundred horses for her own personal use, and a whole army of grooms and officials attached to the "Stable", was gigantic. But the drain of this personal extravagance upon what should have been the revenues of France was enormously increased by the organized system of social graft elaborated in the Court. The aristocracy engaged in a perpetual intrigue to obtain from the king or queen profitable sinecures or gifts of land or money. Those who were in favour at Court expected to obtain for themselves and for their relations and friends the reversion to sinecures which became vacant or, in case of need, the creation of new sinecures. The nephew of a Duchess, who had the privilege of handing the queen

her shift every morning when she got out of bed, felt badly treated if he did not obtain a lucrative post on his twenty-first birthday, and, if he married, a royal gift of money or land or both. The sums extracted from the king and the country by those who stood very high in favour at Court were colossal. Very early in Louis XVI.'s reign, the good Count Mercy, who watched so tenderly over Marie Antoinette, was alarmed by the spoils obtained by the Polignac family when the Duchesse de Polignac became the queen's favourite. On December 17, 1779, he writes to the queen's mother:

Depuis quatre ans on compte que toute la famille de Polignac, sans aucun mérite envers l'État et par pur faveur, s'est déjà procuré tant en grandes charges qu'en autres bienfaits pour près de cinq cent milles livres de revenus annuels.¹

Looking back from our time to the days of the eighteenth century, one sees a butterfly bloom of beauty upon the surface of life in that age. It has the soft texture of ordered civilization and civility; it is gaily coloured by manners and politeness, wit and sociability; its movements are slow and graceful. The eloquence of a famous passage in Burke has made, for most English people, the lives of the king and queen and their Court at Versailles an emblem of this eighteenth-century romance. Yet anyone who reads contemporary memoirs and letters cannot fail to see that the life actually lived by Louis XVI., Marie Antoinette, and their intimates was of a dreary and almost barbarous futility. The ceremonial etiquette, which began in bed in the morning and only ended when they were replaced in bed with the necessary formalities at night, and to which many hours of the

¹ Arneth, *op. cit.* vol. iii. p. 382.

day had to be devoted, would, if it were found to-day surrounding the king of an African tribe, be regarded as barbarous and ridiculous. The king and queen and the Court circle were completely dissociated from the intellectuality and wit for which the eighteenth century is now famous. Catherine the Great of Russia and Frederick the Great of Prussia might count Voltaire, Diderot, or Grimm among their friends and correspondents, and they prided themselves on being, at least in theory, the patrons of enlightenment. But at the French and Austrian Courts "les philosophes" were regarded with terror and disgust,¹ and even if this had not been so, neither Louis XVI. nor Marie Antoinette were mentally capable of understanding or discussing their ideas. The queen, when she was not occupied with the routine of etiquette and intrigue, found her chief pleasure in a feverish gaiety of dancing, acting, and gambling. The king, when he was not occupied with hunting or clock-making, found no pleasure in anything; afflicted with the boredom hereditary among the Bourbons, he drifted silent, awkward, and melancholy through his wife's gaieties.

Meanwhile the government of France had to be carried on, and the power and responsibility of governing rested with Louis and Marie Antoinette. He was congenitally and she temperamentally incapable, but it is remarkable that the more incap-

¹ In 1774 the Emperor Joseph, who also prided himself on being "advanced", came to France to visit his sister, Marie Antoinette. When it was learned that he proposed to visit Voltaire, Tissot, and Haller on the way, the Courts of Vienna and Paris were horrified. Mercy sums up the *philosophes* to Maria Theresa as "ces savants et philosophes modernes, qui, dans leur vie privée, leurs ouvrages et leurs détestables principes, ne donnent que des exemples propres à bouleverser la société et y faire naître le trouble et le désordre". See Arneth, *op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 102.

able they proved themselves of fulfilling their responsibilities the more blindly they clung to their powers. The government was carried on through a Council of Ministers appointed by the king. The king and his ministers made the laws, and the administration was carried on in the Provinces through the "Intendants" who were appointed by and were only responsible to the king and the Council. The whole administration was incompetent, despotic, erratic, irresponsible, and economically unfair and unsound. In 1780 the machinery of French government was about 300 years out of date; it had no relevant points of contact with the social, economic, and intellectual condition of the people upon whom it was imposed. The attempt of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette to make this machinery turn the complicated wheels of eighteenth-century society may be compared to that of an imbecile child trying to fly an aeroplane with the pistons and boiler of the first steam engine.

Between 1775 and 1789 the dislocation between the machinery of government and the condition of society was so obvious that the necessity for reform was widely recognized. There was even considerable agreement as to the nature of the reforms which were needed. Somehow or other the revenue must be made to equal the expenditure. The exemption of the nobility and clergy from taxation could no longer be maintained. Some of the antiquated obstructions to internal trade must be removed. Some share in the government and control over the administration must be given to the people. Even the king was dimly aware that these reforms were imperative. Three times during his reign he took the first step towards them, only in each case to draw back—in 1774 when he appointed Turgot Minister of Finance, in

1777 when he appointed Necker, and in 1788 when he recalled Necker.

The French Revolution, looked at from one point of view by the generations which followed it, will always appear to be one of the most mysterious and inexplicable outbreaks of human folly and violence. It was so obviously unnecessary. It began with demands that practically everyone in France agreed should be granted. It looks as if, between 1780 and 1791, any statesman of moderate intelligence and courage might have turned the movement into peaceful and constitutional channels. But men and events in Paris seem during those years to have been moved blindly in the other direction by the hand of a malignant deity; and with each approach to violence and anarchy the momentum increases. It is not surprising that many people have tried to find an explanation for this extraordinary phenomenon by assuming that the movement towards anarchy was deliberately instigated and directed from the first by wicked men—secret societies, Freemasons, Jews, Gileanists, or republicans—political prejudice determining in each case what class of man is selected as instigators, because political prejudice so often determines what class of men are considered to be wicked.

History, however, becomes much more explicable once it is realized that political wickedness hardly exists, or exists only in the delusions of political prejudice. Men are not politically wicked, though they are politically blind and almost incredibly stupid. If one tries to explain the French Revolution by finding its causes in wicked motives imputed to persons with whom one disagrees politically, history becomes a moral fairy tale suitable to be read only in nurseries. If one remembers, what most historians appear never to have noticed, that gross stupidity is not an un-

common characteristic of human beings, and if one examines the political psychology of those who took part in the French Revolution and the political matrix which gave its impress to that psychology, the events of 1789 to 1791 seem to be less mysterious and less inexplicable.

The stupidity of Louis, Marie Antoinette, and the small circle of their most trusted advisers, largely determined the course which the Revolution took in its first stages, and, once the tide began to flow in that direction, it could only have been stemmed or deflected by very wise and courageous statesmanship. The king was one of those dangerously stupid and well-meaning persons whose characters contain alternate strata of weakness and obstinacy, and it so happened that he yielded where he ought to have been firm and was firm where he ought to have yielded. It was essential that he should be an active party to three considerable political acts, if the dislocation between the machinery of government and the conditions of society was to be reduced and violent disruption avoided. He had to allow someone to reform the finances; he had to curtail the hereditary privileges of the privileged classes; he had himself to curtail his own despotic power. His psychology and the psychology of the privileged classes, interacting upon each other, prevented any of these acts, while the peculiar political communal psychology of France at the time, to which I shall return later, made resistance to these changes extremely dangerous. The danger was increased by the alternations of weakness and firmness in the king's character which were reflected in his policy. From the day when he appointed Turgot in 1774 to the fatal day in 1789 when he closed the doors of the "Salle des Menus Plaisirs" against the National Assembly, he vacil-

lated between reform and resistance to reform. The appointment of Turgot and Necker and the proposals laid before the Assembly of Notables in 1787 by Calonne show that at moments it was possible for sensible people to make him understand and accept the necessity of some financial reforms and some curtailment of privileges. But as soon as practical steps had to be taken to carry out these reforms, the psychology of the small privileged class which surrounded the king, and whose material interests were affected, became a determining factor. Louis invariably yielded to their pressure, and so the drift towards bankruptcy and revolution continued. Even more disastrous than this vacillation was the firmness of the king where the preservation of his own powers was in question. In ordinary life one often notices that the most incompetent people are the most punctilious with regard to their own dignity and the most jealous to assert their "rights", and in history some of the kings who have proved themselves the least competent to rule have been the most determined to rule despotically. Louis XVI. of France, like Charles I. of England, was one of them. The greatest firmness which he ever showed in his life was when, between 1786 and May 1789, his Government exhausted every expedient in order to resist the demand for the summoning of the States-General in order, that is, to preserve the despotic power of the King.

The crisis of Louis's life and of European civilization occurred in those three years between 1786 and 1789. The Government could no longer carry on at all without some reforms; every class in the community knew and admitted that fact. The Government itself was forced to act and by its acts, by the proposals of the king's ministers, Calonne, Brienne,

and¹ Necker successively, it showed that it really knew what the essential reforms should be—financial reform involving taxation of the privileged orders and curtailment of the autocratic power of the king's government. De Tocqueville says that if Louis had had the right character and the necessary abilities, he might have accomplished most of the greatest changes in society and government which were accomplished by the Revolution, and not only might have retained his crown, but have considerably increased his power.¹ Few who study the political psychology of France between 1780 and 1790 will disagree, but Louis's last chance came in 1786 and that he failed to take it was due as much to his possessing the psychology of the despotic monarch as to his lacking ability and character. He and his ministers were prepared to begin the financial reforms, they were not prepared to associate the "people" with the Government. The summoning of the Notables in February 1787 was an expedient for avoiding a summons of the States-General, for the States-General was the symbol of popular participation in government. The struggle between the king and the people during the next two years determined the course of the Revolution. It centred in this demand for the States-General, first publicly made by the Parlement of Paris in refusing to register the royal edicts for taxation. As the demand became more insistent, the acts of the king became more arbitrary, and he himself more insistent on his right to rule despotically. The stage for the Revolution was set when the Parlement was forced to register the edicts, when the judges were arrested and confined to fortresses under royal *lettres de cachet*, when the king's minister, Brienne, on November 19, 1787, told the

¹ *L'Ancien Régime*, vol. iii. ch. iii.

Parlement at the "Royal Sitting", that "all power belonged to the King, who was responsible to God alone", when the military were used to compel the metropolitan and provincial Parlements to register edicts. The last act of the tragedy began in June 1789. On June 23, at the Royal Sitting, when Louis surrounded the Hall with soldiers and then personally told the Tiers-état that they had no right to discuss the Constitution and ordered the States-General to separate, he announced his intention of retaining his own absolute powers. When on July 11, after massing troops in Paris, he dismissed Necker and appointed the Duc de Broglie War Minister, he gave the signal for the outbreak of war between absolutism and democracy. Once war has broken out, whether it be international or civil war, the psychology of individuals changes, and there rapidly follows a complete change in communal psychology. Violent passions arise from the use of force and soon make people distort or even forget the reasons why they are using or resisting force. There is nothing really surprising in the events which followed 1791, the execution of the king, the Reign of Terror, the emergence of Danton, Robespierre, and Napoleon; what is surprising is that the political stupidity of a handful of people during the years between 1786 and 1789 should have made those events practically inevitable.

I have so far been considering the position of the king and the privileged classes in the French political matrix of the eighteenth century. It has great resemblances to and differences from that of the king and privileged classes in the English political matrix of the same century. In both countries political power was an inherited privilege exercised according to a system determined by the dead hand of history,

while the machinery of government, so determined, was not in harmony with, and was becoming more and more out of harmony with, the social structure and the communal psychology which developed as a new form of society developed. In England the discord was mitigated by the lack of complete rigidity in the system of privilege, the division of the privilege of power between king and aristocracy and landed gentry, the tradition of political compromise, and the absence of political ideas; on the other hand it was accentuated by the rapid development of a new economic social structure. In France it was mitigated by the slowness of the economic development, but accentuated by the rigidity of the system of privilege and government, the absolutism of the king, the economic privileges of the privileged classes, and the extraordinary development among all classes of the habit of thinking about politics. The effect of this thinking upon the communal psychology of France was very important, because, as was pointed out earlier in this book, nothing is so unusual or so dangerous in individuals or in societies as thought.

The *philosophes*, Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rousseau, and the Encyclopaedists, during the years which preceded the Revolution, taught Frenchmen of all classes to think about politics and even to apply the test of reason to their social and political institutions. M. Rouston, who has written a brilliant book showing how the questioning, sceptical, rational, reforming attitude of the *philosophes* gradually permeated the different classes, sums up: "The influence of the *philosophes* upon the course of the whole of the eighteenth century was real and decisive: they brought about the French Revolution".¹ That is true, and the

¹ *Pioneers of the French Revolution* (English translation), p. 287.

really interesting thing is to trace the effect of thought upon a communal psychology which made the events of 1789 to 1815, if not inevitable, at least possible. If the facts are closely examined, the Revolution will be found to be one of the most intricate examples of that complicated interaction between the old and new communal psychology and the structure of society to which reference was made in Chapter II. of Part I. (p. 56).

The social and political structure of France was, as I have said, extremely rigid and it tended to become even more rigid during the first half of the eighteenth century. The dislocation between the political and social institutions and the economic and social development was serious, and every history book which deals with the period is full of examples of its disastrous effects: poverty and over-taxation, luxury and under-taxation, famine, riots, bankruptcy. These conditions produced a very widespread discontent, as a rule, like most popular discontent, vague and sullen, but liable from time to time to show itself in outbreaks of violence. "Cet esprit de mutinerie", which worried Maria Theresa in 1775, had in fact been growing in France for fifty years before the Revolution. Already by the middle of the century it was showing itself in sporadic "émeutes" and "combustions", which, it was recognized at the time, might easily become revolutionary. "Les Parisiens sont en grande combustion", writes D'Argenson in his *Journal* in 1753. "Un magistrat m'a dit qu'à la suppression du Châtelet, il ne doute pas que l'on ferait des barricades, et que c'est par là que la révolution commencerait."

This popular discontent was vague and sullen, as I have said, and only occasionally issued in vague and violent outbreaks which remind one of the

Gordon riots in London. But there was one element in French popular psychology during the eighteenth century which existed before the *philosophes* began to affect public opinion and which had no counterpart in eighteenth-century England. All historians agree that the French people were intensely loyal to the monarchy right up to the year 1789; they seemed to think, with Voltaire, that it is natural to love a dynasty which has reigned for 800 years. The fact must be accepted as true, but it must be considered in relation to the funerals, not only of Louis XVI. who was decapitated by his loving subjects, but of his predecessors on the throne, Louis XV. and Louis XIV. Louis XIV. was one of the great kings of European history, whose reign was long, victorious, and glorious; but it is only in national anthems that reigns are both happy and glorious, and, when the eighteenth century was still very young and Louis, being very old, died, his death was welcomed with ecstatic joy by his loving subjects. They laughed and drank and sang; they shouted insults and obscenities after his corpse when they saw it borne along the rue de Saint-Denis. "I cannot recall without horror", wrote the Duc de Richelieu, "the disgraceful conduct of the people of Paris on the day of the funeral of their sovereign. The death of the most odious tyrant could not have afforded more pleasure."¹ He was succeeded by his great-grandson, Louis XV., who reigned for fifty-nine years. The ecstasy of joy with which the French welcomed the death of the great-grandfather was equalled by that with which they greeted the accession of the great-grandson. All contemporaries agree that during the first part of his reign Louis XV. was worshipped throughout France; he was universally "*le Bien-Aimé*". Yet his death in

¹ Roustan, *The Pioneers of the French Revolution*, p. 30.

1774 evoked the same spontaneous outburst of popular rejoicing as had that of Louis XIV. in 1715. There was the same "disgraceful conduct" of the people of Paris; the same laughter and drinking and singing and shouting of insults after the corpse along the rue de Saint-Denis: "Va-t'en salir l'histoire!" shouted from the pavement by some nameless, drunken genius, was his funeral oration. And immediately the same cycle in the tides of hope and disappointment, of love and hate, began again with Louis XVI. He was welcomed with the same hopeful joy as his grandfather. Nothing had changed, except that men's patience had become shorter and their tempers quicker. Also the third wave is notoriously the largest, and the third royal funeral was the most disgraceful. The subjects of Louis XVI. refused to wait for him to die in his bed in order to be able to rejoice at his death.

It is only because historians have been more interested in events than in communal psychology that the significance of the way in which the French buried their kings in the eighteenth century has escaped them. The popular rejoicing at the death of Louis XIV. and Louis XV. may be compared with the Gordon riots: they were symptoms of something working in the political psychology of the lower orders. In London the mob dragged the Prime Minister from his carriage and pulled his wig off and burnt the Lord Chief Justice's house over his head; they left the king alone, and it is inconceivable that the funeral of any of the Georges should have been made a festival of public rejoicing. Meanwhile the French welcomed each new king with fervour, only to insult his corpse and dance with joy upon his grave; they left the king's ministers alone, or at least they never got beyond hoot-

ing the Chancellor Maupeou when he ceased to be Chancellor.

The London and Paris mobs were not politically minded, but they had the ordinary man's faculty, in ordinary affairs, of "putting two and two together". When the Englishman pulled Lord North's wig off and the Frenchman spat on the coffins of Louis XIV. and Louis XV., they were applying common sense to politics and laying the foundations of the modern theory and practice of nineteenth-century democracy. They showed clearly that they knew in whose hands lay the exercise of political power, and, therefore, upon whose head lay the responsibility for the manner of its use. Particularly in France the violent alternation of love and hope followed by hatred and insult, in the attitude of the people towards their kings, is politically rational and significant. All political power was in the hands of the king; the people knew it; all their political hopes were centred in him; and, when he disappointed them, he became the author of their misfortunes and the object of their anger.

There is ample evidence that widespread political discontent was an active element in the communal psychology of France for over fifty years before the Revolution. Barbier in his *Journal* is one witness. This Paris lawyer, who kept a diary from 1718 to 1763, had the mind, character, and attitude which have been typical of the middle-class man in all ages. But in no age and place except the eighteenth century and France could a Barbier have written the *Journal* of Edmond-Jean-François Barbier. The ordinary middle-class man is always a supporter of the Government and a grumbler against the Government. Below him are the lower orders, his "inferiors", alien, uncouth, a force liable at any moment

to become dangerous, violent, and out of control. Above him are his "superiors", the aristocracy or plutocracy and governing classes, whom he supports as the bulwark of law and order, but against whom he is always ready to grumble because of their taxes, their corruption, their political incompetence, and their arrogance. And far away at the top of the hierarchy of human society is the king for whom, in normal times, the good bourgeois has a religious veneration and even personal affection.

All these Theophrastian characteristics are to be found in the self-portrait which Barbier has painted for us in his memoirs. But there is something else. Barbier was fourteen years old when there died another typical bourgeois, Samuel Pepys, who also immortalized himself in a diary. A comparison of the political atmosphere of these two diaries will show the nature of this "something else". An analysis of Pepys's diary reveals the political matrix peculiar to English society in the middle of the sixteenth century; but though it was written between two revolutions, it reflects the political psychology of a middle-class man living in an extremely stable and generally contented society. You never in Pepys get the sense of dislocation and strain in the relations between the people among whom and the political institutions under which he lived. Even in June 14, 1667, when the Dutch fleet was at the mouth of the Thames, all that Pepys has to record is that "the City is troubled" and "it is said they did in open streets yesterday, at Westminster, cry, 'A Parliament! A Parliament!'" The worst symptoms of internal disorder and discontent recorded by Pepys in ten years were the troubles with the "Fanatiques" in 1661 and 1662, who, under the leadership of Thomas Venner, the fifth-monarchy man, rose in arms on the morning of January

6, 1661, about thirty-one in number, crying "The King Jesus, and the heads upon the gates", with the object of establishing the Millennium, and under the misapprehension that, to quote from the diary, "the end of the world is at hand, and that next Tuesday is to be the day. Against which, whenever it shall be, good God fit us all." It is true that Pepys will sometimes record that he went to "my Lord's" and there "sat talking with Mr. Moore bewailing the vanity and disorders of the age", but Mr. Moore was a discontented man, and the vanity and disorders of the age are always a conventional subject of conversation for the good bourgeois. A fortnight later, when, as Pepys's custom was, in the evening of the last day of the year—the very year, 1662, when the Fanatiques had prophesied the end of the world—he sat down to write in his diary a summary of his private condition and of public matters, he finds nothing more serious to cause him regret or uneasiness than "our late mayde Sarah going from us", the too public dalliance of the king with my Lady Castlemaine, and the fact that "the Bishoppes are high, and go on without any diffidence in pressing uniformity". And he ends his survey:

My Lord Sandwich is still in good esteem, and now keeping his Christmas in the country; and I in good esteem, I think, as any man can be, with him. Mr. Moore is very sickly, and I doubt will hardly get over his late fit of sickness, that still hangs on him. In fine, for the good condition of myself, wife, family, and estate, in the great degree that it is, and for the public state of the nation, so quiet it is, the Lord God be praised!

Barbier could never have written that last sentence, not only because he was Edmond-Jean-François Barbier and not Samuel Pepys, but also because

neither he nor any Frenchman living in France between 1718 and 1789 breathed a psychological atmosphere of normal political stability and contentment. At no time during those seventy years could the Lord God be praised in Paris "for the public state of the nation, so quiet it is". In the very first pages of the *Journal*, during the extraordinary episode of Law and the finances, the Spanish plot, and the struggle with the *Parlement*, you are in an atmosphere of strain and discontent and instability. It is an atmosphere which persisted in France right up to the Revolution, and, even when for a time, as under the senile hand of Fleury, whom Barbier so much admired, the calm of old age seemed to have descended from the Minister upon the country, it was not the calm of stable contentment, but the dead lull, so full of uneasy tensions, which comes before the violent storm. The outward signs of these tensions are well known, for they are recorded in the history books—the insurrection in Brittany in 1719, for instance, the famine riots of 1740 and 1741, or the extraordinary unrest of 1750, when the people suddenly began to believe that children were being kidnapped by the Government for the purpose of populating the colonies. And the outward signs are reflected in the inner attitude, of distrust and discontent and disquiet, which Barbier and those among whom he lived show towards the Government of France.

Upon this vague distrust, discontent, and disquiet, so widespread through the ordinary minds of ordinary people, there came something which hitherto had been extremely rare, perhaps had never appeared, in the world. I said that if you had been able to examine the inside of an ordinary Englishman's head in 1789, you would have had the greatest difficulty to discover a single political idea. The opposite

would have been true of a Frenchman's. Almost every Frenchman's head in 1789 was already seething with political ideas. For forty years, ever since the publication of *L'Esprit des lois* in 1748, there had fallen upon their brains, and upon their vague discontent and disquiet, a steady rain of political thought. Montesquieu in 1748, the first volume of the *Encyclopaedia* in 1751, *Candide* in 1758 and the *Dictionnaire philosophique* in 1764, *Du Contrat social* in 1762, *De l'homme* in 1772, *Le Mariage de Figaro* in 1784—these are some of the main sources of that rain which began by fertilizing the minds upon which it fell and ended by causing in them an extraordinary political and social fermentation.

The *philosophes* were not the first people in the world to invent political thought or to discuss political ideas in reference to the society in which they lived. But they were the first people who got ordinary men and women in every class to share their thoughts and discussions. The difference between their intimate relation with and permeation of their contemporaries and the aloofness of political thinkers in other times and places can be seen by comparing Pepys with Barbier. Pepys was a far more intelligent and mentally active man than Barbier, but the political thought of his day passed over his head and had no influence upon his ideas or his life. It is true that on November 20, 1661, he went to bed "with mind cheery" and "lay long reading *Hobbs his Liberty and Necessity*, and a little but very shrewd piece, and so to sleep". That was already seven years after the *Letter on Liberty and Necessity* had been published. And on September 3, 1668, he went to his bookseller and paid 24s. for a copy of Hobbes's *Leviathan*, at the second hand, a book which had been published seventeen years before at 8s. and which the Bishops would

"not let be printed again".¹ But no political thought or social speculations of Thomas Hobbes or anyone else affected the mind of Pepys or his attitude to the society in which he lived and to the king's government of which he was a part. His head, like those of his fellow-countrymen in the next century, seems to have been completely empty of political ideas.

Very different is the case of Barbier. As M. Roustan points out, Barbier's diary shows that, as the years went by, he became more and more critical of the political and social system and the government of his time. His attitude towards the finances, religion, the hardships of "the people" as opposed to the bourgeoisie, administrative reforms, the despotic power of the king, came to be very near to those of the *philosophes*. And this was not due merely to a coincidence or to the palpable current of thought which sometimes blows through an era and carries with it the minds of ordinary men who neither read nor speculate about such things. Barbier was an eager purchaser and reader of the books and pamphlets through which the *philosophes* flooded France and Europe with enlightenment. He subscribed to the *Encyclopaedia*. And though he remained until the end of the diary a typical middle-class man, conservative, a supporter of the things and the powers that be, his political ideals always bounded by his own comfort and his own comfortable income, yet he discusses the writings of the *philosophes* with understanding and sympathy and himself criticizes political events in the light of their criticism. The diary ends in 1763, though he lived himself until 1771. In 1763 the *Contrat social* had only just been published and *l'ancien régime* had still a quarter of a century of troubled existence before it, yet we find this rather

¹ It was in fact not reprinted until 1680.

"stuffy", Conservative Parisian *avocat* writing in July 1763 as follows:

We have now only the *Parlements* to deal with affairs. If now their authority and the rights which they claim are diminished, there will no longer be any obstacle in the way of a despotism safe from all attack; if, on the contrary, the *Parlements* unite in opposition to it by strong measures, that can only be followed by a general revolution in the State, which would be a very dangerous event and which would occasion the English and other Powers to avail themselves of the opportunity to seek a pretext for a war, in order to lower the power of France which has been hurtful to them for several centuries.

The Barbier, "who was once a fanatical devotee of absolute power", has, as M. Roustan points out, already travelled a long way from such a political outlook. M. Roustan's comments are as follows:

Note the fear which our bourgeois has of anything in the shape of a revolution. He has his eyes on the neighbours of France and is afraid lest a civil war should lead to a war with some of them. Note also the unlooked-for note of anxiety in regard to a "despotism safe from all attack". Barbier could not possibly have written in this strain in 1741; it is a pity that we cannot follow the development of his ideas down to 1771. We understand his state of mind, however, even as it is: it is the same state of mind which we have noted in the *philosophes*. We have seen how ill informed they were regarding the possible methods by which the royal power might be restricted. The bourgeois is in the same situation. He does not see clearly what can be done, but he is convinced that *something ought to be done*, and it is from the *philosophes* that he has got this conviction.¹

Everything goes to show that Barbier was not an exceptional man in this respect, and that the habit of political and social thought had, under the influence of the *philosophes*, permeated all classes of the

¹ Roustan, *op. cit.* p. 211.

population from the nobility to the bourgeoisie, and even to the urban workers and the peasants. The political pamphlet was, for years before the Revolution, a "best-seller" in the modern sense, and early in 1789 Arthur Young was amazed by the enormous demand for and supply of this kind of literature. "The business going forward at present", he noted on June 9, "in the pamphlet shops of Paris is incredible. . . . We think sometimes that Debrett's or Stockdale's shops at London are crowded, but they are mere deserts compared to Desein's, and some others here, in which one can scarcely squeeze from the door to the counter. . . . This spirit of reading political tracts, they say, spreads into the provinces, so that all the presses of France are equally employed. Nineteen-twentieths of these productions are in favour of liberty, and commonly violent against the clergy and nobility."¹ And another contemporary witness² tells us how one day in 1788 in Paris he stopped to listen to a man speaking at a street corner to a crowd; the man was speaking about a book. The book was Rousseau's *Du Contrat social*; the man was Marat; the crowd was applauding.

The French political matrix differed from the English before 1789 by having within it this widespread discontent which was gradually directed into definite channels by the *philosophes* and the habit of political speculation which they taught to the French. The channels into which that discontent was directed before the revolution were far less "democratic" and political than the course of the revolution itself and of the history of the nineteenth century would lead one to expect. There is a chapter in Tocqueville's *L'Ancien Régime* headed "Comment les

¹ Young, *Travels in France during the Years 1787, 1788, 1789.*

² Mallet du Pan.

Français ont voulu des réformes avant de vouloir des libérés", and the words point to an important fact with regard to the communal psychology of the eighteenth century in France, a mental attitude which we have already observed in English psychology. The foundations of society, political and economic, were, in France as in England, inheritable privileges. The discord and dislocation between the existing institutions on the one side and the new social forms and new social psychology which were rapidly developing on the other were caused primarily by these privileges. The first attack was, therefore, not under the banner of democracy and liberty, but under that of reform; the first line of trenches was dug in front of privilege. The *philosophes* demanded reforms and the people, who experienced in their daily lives the evils of this system of privilege, learnt from the *philosophes* to become articulate reformers. But neither the one nor the other considered democracy and the political liberty of the nineteenth century as an integral part of these reforms. Right up to the beginning of the Revolution the *philosophes* placed all their hopes in the benevolent and enlightened despotism of a Catherine, a Frederick, a Louis, or a Joseph. An enlightened monarch would be a *philosophe* enthroned; he would himself grant the reforms; privilege would vanish, religious intolerance fade away, and the millennium would break into flower in every man's back garden next morning. The mass of the people shared this belief or illusion with their teachers, and in Europe modern democracy was born after, not before, 1789.

There was probably not a Frenchman alive in 1914 who would not have said with Mr. Garvin that the principle of hereditary legislation was an anachronism, "an indefensible and untenable form of personal

privilege". It is true that he would have probably excluded from the generalization females, negroes, and Asiatics, for most Frenchmen still believed that political power should be an inheritable privilege of males born in certain localities or under certain legal conditions. This interesting and often unconscious reservation will require further discussion in another place in this book; here it is only necessary to note that it existed and that, subject to its qualification, the political belief of an ordinary Frenchman in 1914 was that the inheritance of political power was an indefensible and untenable form of personal privilege and that the opposite of such a system of privilege was democracy and liberty, which required that every member of the community should possess and exercise an equal share of political power. He would almost certainly have added that the "Government" should be, in Mill's words, the "tenants or delegates" of the people, and "revocable at their pleasure".¹ There were very few Frenchmen in 1789 who either thought or said anything of the kind. The French draw a clear distinction between *liberté civile* and *liberté politique*. It was civil liberty, not the political liberty of nineteenth-century democracy which the *philosophes* and their eighteenth-century disciples regarded as the antithesis of the system of privilege and demanded as the most necessary reform from an enlightened prince or Government. To them civil liberty meant "liberty of person and property, the original liberty which is the necessary condition of all liberty—consisting above all in the destruction of the last traces of feudalism".² It is true that Montesquieu and Rousseau had discussed political liberty and that many of their disciples talked about it and wrote

¹ Mill, *On Liberty*, ch. i.

² Sorel, *L'Europe et la Révolution Française*, vol. i. p. 205.

about it. But the disciples followed Rousseau in generalization and vagueness rather than Montesquieu in precision and understanding, and the confused ideas which they had about political liberty were mainly due to the fact that, as Sorel says, they had no experience of it. In any case, they regarded political liberty only as a means to obtaining those reforms of which civil liberty was the most important. They desired reforms before they desired liberty, and they became democrats only after they had, as it were by accident, created democracy.

The word "democracy" has brought me to the end of this chapter, and it is advisable to look back, before passing on to the next chapter, and make sure of the position to which it has brought us. European society, particularly in England and France, during the eighteenth century was subjected to increasing strain and stresses arising from a deep-seated disharmony and dislocation within it. Its political and social framework and the political matrix had been given a rigid form, the historical relics of the dead hand and feudalism. The walls, beams, props, and stays which gave to the building its shape and its stability were inheritance and privilege, and in the political matrix political power was one among many inheritable privileges. The strains and stresses were due to the fact that the political and social institutions and matrix thwarted the economic and psychological developments which were rapidly taking place in the society itself. In England industrialism had already given definite shape to the middle- and working-class society of the nineteenth century; in France the beginnings of a similar evolution can be seen.

Look forward from the year 1780 to the year 1850 and then look back again to 1780 and you will see

that the economic development of society in Britain, France, and the rest of Europe in 1850 could not possibly have taken place within the political framework of 1780. Yet that economic development was "inevitable", in the sense that its causes were independent of political causes, constitutions, or illusions. Neither the French king with his *lettre de cachet*, nor the Whig or Tory Peer with his rotten borough could prevent the invention of the steam engine, and the industrialization of western Europe could not be stayed by the fact that God had established the divine right of kings to mismanage the national finances and man had established the constitutional right of English peers to legislate for chimney-sweepers.¹ It was fantastic to imagine that the British Constitution as administered by Lord North or the French Constitution as administered by Jean-Frédéric Phélypeaux, Comte de Maurepas, the Comtesse de Polignac, and the Princesse de Lamballe, was a framework which could adequately contain the world which produced *The Communist Manifesto* of 1848. Yet the possibility of this fantastic impossibility was in 1789 being blindly attempted by the unhappy Louis and brilliantly demonstrated by the philosophic Burke. The attempt to pour the new molten metal of the nineteenth century into the worn-out, feudal matrix of the eighteenth could only have one result—the violent disruption of the matrix.

But the economic was not the only element in eighteenth-century society which was incompatible with its political structure. In France, as we have seen, there was a psychological ferment of new ideas,

¹ In 1804, 1817, 1818, and 1819 the House of Lords successfully prevented the passing of a Bill which would have prevented the horrible practices connected with the employment of children to climb and sweep chimneys.

originating from the *philosophes*, and setting every class in society against the system of inherited privilege. And though in Britain political ideas were much slower in penetrating to the brains of ordinary men, there was already a new psychological ferment.¹ The "reading public", as we know it to-day, was born between 1720 and 1750. Those years saw the end of the system of patrons, the beginning of the modern publishing system, the modern press, the modern best-seller, and the modern circulating library.² This was an intellectual and psychological revolution which was destined in the next hundred years to alter the inside of ordinary men's minds as much as the invention of machines and the industrialization of Europe were to alter the houses, towns, and countries in which they lived. And to a certain extent it was, undoubtedly, part of the same obscure and complicated process of change in society. The breakdown of the patronage system and the development of the relation of author, publisher, and reading public meant that the feudal and privileged intellectualism of the seventeenth century was passing into the democratic intellectualism of the nineteenth. Writers ceased to be dependent on a wealthy patron and to write for him and a small class revolving round patrons; they began to write for publishers (or booksellers, as they were then called) who bought their copyrights and supplied the demand of a new and growing public for books, magazines, and newspapers. The novel sprang into life. Between *Robinson Crusoe* in 1719 and *Pamela* in 1740 over one hundred novels "by native hands" were published—two or

¹ The general change in communal psychology, is more fully analysed in the following chapter.

² See A. S. Collins, *Authorship in the Days of Johnson*. The general conclusions of this book are usually correct, though in details it is very inaccurate.

three times more than the number published in the thirty years before 1719.¹ It is significant that *Pamela* may be regarded in some respects as the first modern novel, as it was the first best-seller in the modern sense, and that it was written on commission for the publishers, Rivington and Osborne, who asked Richardson to write for them "a little Volume of Letters, in a common style, on such subjects as might be of use to those country readers, who were unable to indite for themselves".² Deep down below the surface something was happening to change the world, when a great writer, instead of dedicating his works to "His Grace the Duke of Newcastle, Lord Chamberlain of His Majesty's Household, etc.",³ was writing them "to instruct handsome girls, who were obliged to go out to service, as we phrase it, how to avoid the snares that might be laid against their virtue".⁴ Something was happening, when in 1731 at Clerkenwell Edward Cave printed the first number of the *Gentleman's Magazine* or *Traders' Monthly Intelligencer*, one of the foundation-stones of the modern press and the first magazine to reach a public which twenty years before was not touched by the *Tatler* or the *Spectator*. This thing that was happening below the surface had such immediate and obvious effects upon the professional writer that those who, like Johnson and Goldsmith, lived through the period of transition were well aware of its causes and its effects. In *Letters from a Citizen of the World to his Friend in the East*, published in 1760 to 1762, Goldsmith wrote:

At present, the few poets of England no longer depend

¹ Lord Ernie, *The Light Reading of our Ancestors*, p. 185.

² Richardson, *Correspondence*, Letter to Aaron Hill.

³ Congreve's edition of Dryden's dramatic works was so dedicated in 1735.

⁴ Richardson, *Correspondence*, Letter to Aaron Hill.

on the great for subsistence; they have now no other patrons but the public, and the public, collectively considered, is a good and generous master. It is, indeed, too frequently mistaken as to the merits of every candidate for favour; but, to make amends, it is never mistaken long. . . .

A man of letters at present, whose works are valuable, is perfectly sensible of their value. Every polite member of the community, by buying what he writes, contributes to reward him. The ridicule, therefore, of living in a garret, might have been wit in the last age, but continues such no longer, because no longer true. A writer of real merit now may easily be rich, if his heart be set only on fortune: and for those who have no merit, it is but fit that such should remain in merited obscurity. He may now refuse an invitation to dinner, without fearing to incur his patron's displeasure, or starve by remaining at home. He may now venture to appear in company with just such clothes as other men generally wear, and talk even to princes with all the conscious superiority of wisdom. Though he cannot boast of fortune here, yet he can bravely assert the dignity of independence.

The books and newspapers which people read are the mirror of their own culture or civilization, and also the soil from which springs the intellectual vegetation in the culture of their children and children's children. Even the conditions of the trade of providing reading matter and the social attitude of the providers are important in their effects and historically significant, for men do not think and feel and act the same in a society where a writer has to cover His Grace the Duke or Her Grace the Duchess with dedicatory compliments as they do in one in which Dr. Johnson reads a lesson in manners to the Earl of Chesterfield or the nameless journalist has to convert himself into a loud-speaker for the multiple newspaper proprietor.

The Englishman of the eighteenth century was un-

troubled by political ideas and untouched by the intellectual curiosity and revolt which the *philosophes* spread through France. But he was already becoming a reading animal and so democratizing the trade of the writer. The attitude of the writer towards society, as Goldsmith and Johnson noted, instantly changed, and this again reacted upon the reading public. The intellectual quiescence of Pepys and his age gave place to a vague and undirected psychological fermentation which created a large and indiscriminating public for such works as *Pamela*, the *Gentleman's Magazine*, Robertson's *History of Scotland*, and Duck's *Poems on several Occasions*. This was undoubtedly part of that "something underneath it all" which the Empress of Austria had noted in Bohemia and which she connected, not altogether wrongly, with a European "spirit of revolt".

Maria Theresa was right, because the something underneath it all was psychological, and the new psychology was not compatible with the political and economic structure of society for which the Empress stood. Where writers write for a large public and that public reads what is written, there is immediately some mental activity, and in politics nothing is more dangerous than thought, for, if people think, it is impossible to predict what they will think. Readers of Richardson and the *Gentleman's Magazine* did not think about the British Constitution or the Spirit of Law or the Rights of Man, but they were creating a soil in which, when watered by the French Revolution, all kinds of political and other ideas would flourish. For readers of *Pamela* or Watts's *Divine and Moral Songs* in one generation easily become readers of Tom Paine or William Cobbett in the next.

One gets occasionally direct glimpses of this social

and political psychology of the ordinary man, of the intellectual matrix of eighteenth-century England. For instance, there was published in 1925 the diary of Thomas Turner.¹ Turner was a small shopkeeper in a little Sussex village and he kept a brief diary between 1754 and 1765. He was uneducated, ignorant, and uncultured, living a life in which amusement or relaxation almost always meant boisterous drunkenness. In the short, ill-written entries you see clearly the mind of a thwarted and unhappy man. By nature and instinct he was a man of intelligence and intellectual curiosity; he was one member of that new "reading public", the appearance of which made it possible for Richardson, Goldsmith, and Johnson to write, not for aristocratic patrons, but for the common reader. Turner read the *Spectator*, *Clarissa Harlowe*, Boyle's *Lectures*, Smart's Poem on *Eternity and Immensity*, the *Tatler*, the *Freeholder*, Homer's "Odysseys", an abridgment of the *Life of Madame de Maintenon*, Tillotson's *Sermons*, Sherlock's *On Death*, *Paradise Lost*, Gay's *Fables*, Salmon *On Marriage*, Addison's *Evidences for the Christian Religion*, Harvey's *Meditations*, Drelincourt *On Death, As You Like It* and *The Taming of the Shrew* (both of which he thought good comedies), Beveridge's *Thoughts*, Wilkes's *North Briton*, Burnet's *History of the Reformation*, Pope's *Odyssey*. If Turner had been born in 1829 instead of in 1729, he would have been an extremely intelligent and well-read man and would have found outlets in politics and other subjects for his intellectual curiosity. His head would have been full of political ideas; he would probably have been a keen Liberal, and it is unlikely that he would have died a small shopkeeper in the village of East Hoathly. But in 1760

¹ *The Diary of Thomas Turner of East Hoathly (1754-1765)*, edited by Florence Maria Turner.

there was no escape for the insignificant Thomas Turner from the exact spot in which the rigid social system had placed him. If Davies Giddy, President of the Royal Society, had been in the House of Commons at that time he would have had no cause to fear that education would make Thomas Turner "factious and refractory" or teach him dissatisfaction with the "laborious employment to which his rank in society had destined him". For Turner there were no fields beyond the fences. It never occurred to him that life could be any different for him from what it was. His dissatisfaction with it appears only in his disgust at his own amusements, his self-accusations, and the sense of thwarted inclinations which permeates the whole diary.

Thomas Turner was certainly not representative of his class. Mr. Porter, the clergyman, and his wife, with whom Turner got drunk, and the rest of the company which pulled him out of bed at 5 in the morning and made him dance in his wife's petticoats until 3 in the afternoon were probably not troubled either by his scruples or his aspirations. But scattered through the villages of England during the eighteenth century there must have been a good many men like Turner, men with an interest in books and ideas whom the iron social system kept bound within the narrow, barbarous life of an East Hoathly and to the laborious employment to which their rank in society had destined them. To-day many people look back to the village life of rural England through the sentimental haze of the Romantic revival, in which all the yeomen are "sturdy" and the ale-houses are bowered in roses. In reality it was not a civilized life at all, unless the standard of civilization be that of the drunkard, the sheep, or the cabbage. When seen in its bare reality in such daily diaries as those of Turner

or even of the Rev. James Woodforde,¹ it is a mixture of laborious employment, narrow dreariness, and boisterous brutality. How many village-Hampdens, mute inglorious Miltons, or Cromwells guiltless of their country's blood were condemned to keep the noiseless tenor of their way through these barbarous villages, the poets and the modern romantics may be left to estimate. Thomas Turner was no genius *manqué*; he was not a psychologist or a politician or a social philosopher. He was just a man of some intelligence and mental curiosity, who might have been civilized. In 1760 he had no hope of civilization, no consciousness of the political and social system which barred him from civilization. He can hardly be said to have been, in the modern sense, discontented; he was dimly unhappy, socially unhappy. But to be socially unhappy may be the first step towards civilization or even towards liberty, equality, and fraternity. And he had taken another step which may lead in the same direction: he had begun to read; he was one of the new reading public. Here he was feeling in East Hoathly that "something underneath it all" which, far away in Bohemia, was causing peasants to say that the *corvée* was abolished. Turner was a most simple-minded and loyal patriot, and he hardly ever mentions politics, but in his entry of July 13, 1762, you may see this "something underneath it all" at work in Sussex:

In the even read several political papers called the *North Briton*, which are wrote by John Wilks, Esq., member for Ailsbery in Bucks, for the writing of which he has been committed to the Tower, and procured his release by a writ of "Hæbus Corpus". I really think they breath forth such a spirit of liberty, that it is an extreme good paper.

¹ *The Diary of a Country Parson: the Reverend James Woodforde, 1758-1781*. Edited by John Beresford.

The social and political system which kept Turner pinned in East Hoathly was in some danger when Turner read John Wilkes there and reflected on the spirit of liberty. In the next generation, as I said, the Thomas Turners would be reading Tom Paine and William Cobbett. The results must be examined in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

DEMOCRACY

"Cependant le bonheur des hommes mérite bien aussi quelque attention."—D'ARGENSON, *Mémoires*, April 1749.

431 B.C. Pericles in the Funeral Oration in Thucydides, Book II.:

"We have a form of government which does not enter into rivalry with the institutions of our neighbours; we do not copy others so much as offer ourselves to them as an example. We are called a democracy, because the city is administered not for the few, but for the majority. But although according to the laws everyone in their private relations is upon an equality, yet the man who is any way distinguished receives preference in public life, not as a privilege, but because of his merits; and if a man can serve his country, poverty or obscurity will not stand in his way. Liberty is the principle of our public life, and in our everyday life we are not mutually suspicious or angry with our neighbour because he pleases himself, nor do we look upon him with that kind of disapproval which, though harmless, is annoying. While we do not trouble one another by interference in private affairs, we are prevented from breaking the laws by respect for them; we obey both the magistrates and the laws, especially those which are for the protection of the injured and those unwritten laws which have the support of public opinion."

416 B.C. Athenian Envoy to the Melian Envoy in Thucydides, Book V.:

"We believe that the Gods, and we know that men, by a law of nature everywhere rule wherever they have the power to rule."

About 330 B.C. Aristotle, *Politics*, Book I.:

"Inferior kinds of men are by nature slaves, and it is better for them, as for all inferiors, to be under the rule of a master. For that man is by nature a slave who can be, and therefore is, the property of someone else, and has sufficient intelligence to understand, but not to reason. The lower animals, however, do not even understand; they merely obey their instincts. As a matter of fact, the use of slaves and of domestic animals does not differ much: from the physical labour of both are obtained the services necessary for life."

January 6, 1649. Resolution of the House of Commons:

"That the People are, under God, the original of all just power; that the Commons of England in Parliament assembled, being chosen by and representing the People, have the supreme power in this nation; that whatsoever is enacted or declared for law by the Commons in Parliament assembled, hath the force of law, and all the people of this nation are concluded thereby, although the consent and concurrence of King or House of Peers be not had thereunto."

March 3, 1766. Louis XV. to the Parlement de Paris:

"C'est en ma personne seule que réside l'autorité souveraine. . . . C'est à moi seul qu'appartient le pouvoir législatif sans dépendance et sans partage. L'ordre public tout entier émane de moi; j'en suis le gardien suprême. Mon peuple n'est qu'un avec moi; les droits et les intérêts de la nation, dont on ose faire un corps séparé du monarque, sont nécessairement unis avec les miens et ne reposent qu'entre mes mains."

July 4, 1776. American Declaration of Independence:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with inalienable rights; that among these rights are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that, whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish

n'est lorsque la nécessité publique, légalement constatée, l'exige évidemment, et sous la condition d'une juste et préalable indemnité. ,

1791. *A Letter from Mr. Burke to a Member of the National Assembly:*

"I am unalterably persuaded that the attempt to oppress, degrade, impoverish, confiscate, and extinguish the original gentlemen, and landed property of a whole nation, cannot be justified under any form it may assume. I am satisfied beyond a doubt, that the project of turning a great empire into a vestry, or into a collection of vestries, and of governing it in the spirit of a parochial administration, is senseless and absurd, in any mode, or with any qualifications. I can never be convinced that the scheme of placing the highest powers of the state in churchwardens and constables, and other such officers, guided by the prudence of litigious attornies, and Jew brokers, and set in motion by shameless women of the lowest condition, by keepers of hotels, taverns, and brothels, by pert apprentices, by clerks, shop-boys, hair-dressers, fiddlers, and dancers on the stage (who, in such a commonwealth as yours, will in future overbear, as already they have overborne, the sober incapacity of dull uninstructed men, of useful but laborious occupations) can never be put into any shape, that must not be both disgraceful and destructive. . . . As to the people at large, when once these miserable sheep have broken the fold, and have got themselves loose, not from restraint, but from the protection of all the principles of natural authority, and legitimate subordination, they become the natural prey of impostors. When they have once tasted the flattery of knaves, they can no longer endure reason, which appears to them only in the form of censure and reproach. . . . Those who have been once intoxicated with power, and have derived any kind of emolument from it, even though but for one year, never can willingly abandon it. They may be distressed in the midst of all their power; but they will never look to anything but power for their relief. When did distress ever oblige a prince to abdicate his authority. And what effect will it have upon those who are made to believe themselves a people of princes?"

DEMOCRACY

December 8, 1820. Circular signed at the Congress of Troppau by Austria, Russia, and France and communicated to all their diplomatic representatives:

“ . . . les Plénipotentiaires qui pouvaient recevoir à Troppau même les ordres de leurs Souverains ont arrêté entr'eux, et soumis aux délibérations des Cours de Paris et de Londres, les principes à suivre envers les États qui subissent une altération violente dans la forme de leur régime intérieur, ainsi que les moyens, soit de conciliation, soit de force, propres à ramener au sein de l'Alliance ceux de ces États, sur lesquels on peut exercer une action salutaire et efficace.

“ Afin d'entamer à son égard les mesures de conciliation, les Souverains présents à Troppau ont adressé à sa Majesté Sicilienne l'invitation de se réunir avec eux à Laybach, démarche dont le seul but a été d'affranchir la volonté de sa Majesté, et de l'engager d'interposer sa médiation entre ses peuples égarés et les pays dont ils compromettent le repos.

“ Décidés à ne point reconnoître les Gouvernemens enfantés par la sédition, les Souverains ne pouvaient entrer en rapport qu'avec la personne du Roi.”

1848. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in *The Communist Manifesto*:

“The modern State is but an executive committee for administering the affairs of the whole bourgeois class. . . .

“All previous historical movements were movements of minorities, or in the interest of minorities. The proletarian movement is the conscious movement of the immense majority in the interest of the immense majority. The proletariat, the lowest stratum of existing society cannot stir, cannot raise itself up without the whole of the higher strata forming official society being sprung into the air. . . .

“We have already seen that the first step in the working-class revolution is the raising of the proletariat to the position of ruling class, the victory of Democracy. . . . The proletariat will use its political power to wrest by degrees all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralise all instruments of production in the hands of the State, i.e., of the

proletariat organised as the ruling class, and to increase as rapidly as possible the total mass of productive forces. . . .

"When in the course of development class distinctions have disappeared, and all production is concentrated in the hands of associated individuals, the public power will lose its political character. Political power, properly speaking, is the organised power of one class for the purpose of oppressing another. . . ."

1928. *Labour and the Nation*. A Statement of the Labour policy and programme of the British Labour Party.

"The Labour Party considers that the sole escape from the difficulties at present surrounding the nation is to be found in the acceptance, without reservations or qualifications, of the full implications of democracy, in their social and economic, no less than in their political, significance. It stands, it need hardly be said, for the unquestioned supremacy of the House of Commons, and for uncompromising resistance to any attempt to establish a Second Chamber representative of special classes or interests, designed to thwart the duly registered decisions of the democracy and with power to interfere with financial measures. It regards it as essential that the system of plural voting, under which one rich man is treated as the equivalent of several of his poorer neighbours, shall be forthwith abolished; that the fullest possible publicity shall be established with regard to Party Funds; that the disgusting practice of selling so-called honours, including seats in the Second Chamber, carried on by Conservatives and Liberals alike, shall be finally ended; that more stringent legislation against corrupt practices shall be introduced; that an efficient system of polling stations within easy reach of the electors shall be provided; and that the law relating to elections shall be amended in such a manner as finally to end the influence—at once unjust and corrupting—which is exercised by wealth over the political life of the country. . . . The Labour Party will not be content, however, merely to place political democracy beyond the reach of assault, important though it knows that task to be. It holds that the indispensable corollary of political democracy—and ultimately, indeed, the only

DEMOCRACY

sure guarantee for its survival—must be the abolition of the gross disparities of wealth that shock all thoughtful men and women to-day, and such a reconstruction of the industrial system as will secure to the mass of the workers the reality and not merely the name, of freedom. It stands for the systematic and unremitting use of political power to abolish social privilege and economic tyranny, and to create a society in which the treasures of civilization shall be, not the monopoly of a class, but the heritage of the nation."

INTRODUCTORY

In the nineteenth century, all historians are agreed, there were two dominating political ideas: democracy and nationalism. The shape of human society, if indeed it is determined at all by what men think and believe, must bear heavily impressed upon it to-day the marks of what our fathers and grandfathers believed about the divine right of kings, the relation between political wisdom and noble birth or landed property or considerable bank balances, the harmony between *Vox Dei* and *Vox Populi*, and the mysterious and complicated laws which should govern the connection between the form of a state and the "nationality" of its inhabitants. And, if like Satan, we should go to and fro in the earth for those hundred years, and observe the political bubbles upon it and upon the surface of human affairs—bubbles which to the inhabitants of the human ant-heap themselves appear to be great events and landmarks in history—we should be compelled to agree that the blowing and the bursting of these bubbles were connected somehow or other with democracy and nationalism. The aristocratic Europe of Castlereagh, Metternich, and the Tsar Alexander, strait-laced with treaties and Holy Alliances and principles of legitimacy, gave place to a politically fluid Europe in which Parlia-

ments, votes, parties, Governments rising and falling on the swell of "public opinion", oust the kings and the emperors, and the aristocratic ministers of kings and emperors. The bubbles are in 1830, 1832, 1848, 1867, 1870—it is the history of European democracy. On the continent of America, a chain of monarchical colonies is converted into a chain of independent republics, and in the north in the United States of America the largest and most self-conscious experiment in "government by the people" that the world has ever seen may be studied by the philosophic historian. It is the history of American democracy. The continent of Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Canada exchange the dependency of colonies for the independence of "Self-Governing" Dominions. It is the history of British democracy. Even in Asia, as the nineteenth century wanes or the twentieth waxes, you may observe republics in Turkey or China, parliaments in Japan or Persia, the beginnings of "responsible government" in India. It is the history of Eastern democracy.

But going to and fro in the earth during the nineteenth century, we should have seen another series of even larger and more active bubbles. It begins far down in the south-east corner of Europe, on the soil where, more than 2500 years ago, were born the first historical European State and the earliest political civilization of Europeans; it begins with a war of national independence and the birth of a Greek national State in the unwilling womb of the Ottoman Empire. It is the beginning of the history of European nationalism. After 1830 the bubbles of nationalism rise thick and fast upon the face of Europe. Within twelve months of the birth of Greece another new national State, Belgium, was brought into existence with the help of a French revolution, an opera

by Scribe, and a diplomatic conference of the Powers in London. There follow wars and risings which are the birth-throes of Germany, Italy, Serbia, Bulgaria, Roumania, or are nationalist miscarriages in Poland and Denmark and Austria and Ireland. It is the history of European nationalism. On the continent of America the United States is no less an experiment in nationality than an experiment in democracy, and the South American colonies pride themselves on having developed into national States as well as into republics. And this nationalism, which is essentially, at first, a European-American phenomenon, gradually spreads and infects Asia and even Africa. Its bubbles are to be observed without much difficulty in Japan, China, India, Persia, Turkey, Egypt, and South Africa.

In some sense, then, which may hereafter require considerable investigation, the ideas of democracy and nationality dominated the nineteenth century. They were the formative elements in its political matrix, taking the place of heredity and privilege which had dominated the eighteenth. Personally I should prefer to add at once to them another idea or group of ideas which, it seems to me, has an equal right to stand with democracy and nationalism as a formative element in nineteenth-century history—imperialism. If one watches carefully the chief political commotions in the human ant-heap from 1820 to, say, 1875, and if one attempts to find, in each case, a name for the motive power producing the hurry and scurry, which in history may appear as a great crisis, a revolution, or a war, over and over again one will be forced to say that the motive force was democracy or nationality or nationalism. But in the last quarter of the century another element perpetually intrudes. In the partition of Africa, in the dealings of European

States with Asia, in the expansion eastwards of the Russian Empire democracy and nationality played no part. The communal idea behind these movements was not that of the People (democracy) or of the Nation (nationalism), but of the Empire (imperialism); the psychological halo of beliefs and desires, which rapidly surrounds and obscures all political ideas and movements, was in these cases not a halo of freedom and equality or of kinship and fraternity, but of aggressive expansion and rule. The same elements, or elements closely related to them, appear active in other directions. In the last quarter of the century, the grouping of States in alliances was neither democratic nor national; it was strictly imperialistic, because determined by the desire to rule or the fear of being ruled. The formative element in the Triple Alliance and Triple Entente was not democratic or national; it was something wider, something militantly international in which the desire for hegemony and the fear of servitude played the dominant part. So, too, the great political crises of the end of the nineteenth century and the first years of the twentieth were always coloured by imperialism. Before that they had been coloured either by democracy or nationality, being revolutions, as in 1830 and 1848, or national risings as in Greece, Belgium, Poland, Hungary, and Ireland, or national wars as in the case of Germany and Italy. After 1875 such crises were always coloured by imperialism, e.g. 1878, Fashoda, the Moroccan crisis, and the everlasting struggle between Russia and Austria for hegemony in the Balkans.

These three political ideas or ideals—democracy, nationality, and imperialism—are not entirely unrelated. Nationality is, in fact, intimately connected with democracy, and imperialism again with

nationality. But the ideas and their manifestations are so complicated that I propose in this chapter to isolate democracy for observation and analysis, to observe it in order, if possible, to discover what part it has really played in determining the history of the human race since 1815.

It will, I think, help us in this investigation if we begin by taking a bird's-eye view of the history of democracy, using for this purpose the eye of the common or composite man alive to-day. The historical vision which meets this composite eye of "ordinary men" is something like this: A great struggle of democracy against— And here immediately we stumble on a difficulty. The composite eye of the common man sees facts differently according as it is set on the right or left side of his political nose. If it be on the left side, he will say that democracy was a struggle against privilege, a struggle of the people against the governing classes for freedom and political equality; if it be on the right side, he will say that democracy was a struggle against aristocracy, a struggle of the lower orders against the upper, of the ignorant masses against the enlightened few, the prize being political power.

This difference of vision, this disagreement as to the direction and meaning of the democratic movement, will occupy us later. For the moment it may be ignored, for in history and politics different people see different aspects of the same facts according as the angle of their vision is from right or left. The history of nineteenth-century democracy, all would agree, was a history of struggle in which the "people" and a privileged class were the contestants and in which political power appeared to be in some sense the prize. Most people, too, would say that the struggle went steadily in favour of democracy.

By the end of the century the old political order had passed away in Europe and America and Australasia and had begun to weaken even in Asia. There were still places, almost at the centre of the modern world, like Berlin, Vienna, and St. Petersburg, where the eighteenth century still obstinately lingered and the machinery of government remained despotic or aristocratic. But politicians and historians, journalists and text-book writers agreed in assuming that we were living in a democratic age and had already seen what they called "the final triumph of democracy". The feeling that democracy had triumphed and was now the established order in the modern world had become so deeply seated and automatic that those who fifty or a hundred years before would have been its most bitter opponents were now its most impassioned defenders. A conservative is condemned by the irony of history always to canonize the political wisdom of his ancestors, and yet always to consider sacred the political institutions against which they fought and which to them were the "worst heretical abominations. Maximian and Galerius, who "entertained the most implacable aversion for the name and religion of the Christians", had they been born a few hundred years later would have entertained the most implacable aversion for the name and religion of pagans and heretics; and those who in 1920 were eager for a crusade against Bolshevism in the name of democracy would, in 1820, have been the chief supporters of the Holy Alliance against the democrats. This does not necessarily mean that in politics conservatives are abnormally stupid and irrational; it is merely an example of a peculiar fact in political communal psychology, namely that the heresy of one generation becomes the dogma of the next at

the moment when people begin to feel that the true believers are fighting a losing fight.

So by 1900 it was commonly assumed that democracy had won and was the established order.¹ All respectable people were democrats, and even the best kind of king was democratic. The worst abomination of the twentieth-century Jacobin is commonly thought to be his open scorn for liberty, equality, and fraternity. But though in 1914 nearly everyone believed that in civilized countries the *ancien régime*, by which they understood a mixture of absolutism and aristocracy, had given place to some form of "government of the people, by the people, for the people", it is a curious fact that, as soon as the war broke out, the struggle was regarded as the great crisis of democracy. Political memory is short, and in the years which follow a war, communal psychology changes rapidly; the events of the decade 1918 to 1928 brought the cooling of heads, hearts, and hopes, disillusionment, and to the majority forgetfulness; so that most people, finding that their hopes have been cheated, have consoled themselves by forgetting that they ever hoped. It is, therefore, worth while trying to recall and reconstruct the attitude, then so common, of those who regarded the war as the crisis of democracy. The writings of almost any patriotic professor or conservative journalist, the speeches of any allied statesman explaining the causes of the war; furnish a mirror upon whose surface the moment indelibly traced the lines of this impermanent phase.

¹ Almost any historical or political text-book will illustrate this assumption, e.g. Mr. John Simpson Penman, an American, writes in *The Irresistible Movement of Democracy* (1923), p. 708: "A study of the history of the democratic movement and the final triumph of democracy ought to reveal to us the direction in which it is going and the aims which it seeks to reach now that it has obtained the ascendancy".

in communal psychology. I will give one quotation, from an eminently respectable, historian and professor who passionately devotes himself to the task of defending political dogmas which have just ceased to be heresies and of attacking political heresies which are on the point of becoming dogmas. Even in 1924 Professor F. J. C. Hearnshaw, Professor of History in King's College, University of London, could still write:¹

Never before had the issue of democracy *versus* autocracy been so clearly and so sharply joined as it was in this cataclysmal year (1918). For it had by this time become evident that, whatever might have seemed to be the immediate or superficial causes of the great conflict, the ultimate and deep matters at stake were the ideas and ideals which separated the self-governing peoples of the world from those still beneath the tutelage of military monarchs. Definite statements from great Allied leaders had announced that the supreme objects of the War were "to obtain security for the democratic governments of the earth", and "to make the world safe for democracy". Solemn warnings had been uttered, when the fortunes of the Allies were at a low ebb, to the effect that defeat would mean irreparable disaster to the cause of constitutionalism. "Democracy", said a British Cabinet minister, "is at one and the same time on its trial and in the crucible. If this War is lost by the Allies the cause of democracy is under eclipse for generations to come, and we leave to our children a heritage of trouble."

Never before had so vast an issue hung so doubtfully in the balance as it did in the early part of the year, and never before had fortune changed so spectacularly, or moved so rapidly and decisively to a culminating crisis, as it did during its autumn months. To the student of modern European history, whose work largely centres round the triple alliances and triangular duels of the great imperial Houses of Habsburg, Romanov, and Hohenzollern, the simultaneous elimination of the three Kaisers,

¹ *Democracy and Labour*, p. 2.

DEMOCRACY

and the disintegration of their dominions, marked a veritable end of an epoch. It seemed to symbolize the overthrow of antiquated despotism, the dethronement of militarism, the final defeat of dynastic ambition, the deliverance of a troubled world from diplomatic intrigue and imperialist aggression. It held out the hope of the advent of a new age marked by international amity, social solidarity, established peace, federated peoples, and universal law. The nightmare menace of German world-dominion was over; the hectic era of the race for armaments had reached its limit; the day of liberty, equality, and fraternity had at last arisen.

Obviously, if our account so far is correct, the composite eye of the ordinary man does not see history—or, at least, the history of democracy—steadily and see it whole. His vision is of democracy marching triumphantly to victory all through the nineteenth century; and yet of it being in deadly peril, “on its trial and in the crucible”, from 1914 to 1918; and again of its complete triumph on November 11, 1918. And on November 11, 1928? *Si monumentum requiris, circumspice*. Russia, Italy, Spain, Poland, the Balkans are all reckoned to be parts of the civilized world. Even the Professor of History in King's College, University of London, must now feel that the final triumph of democracy has not been final, or followed by any of the good things that were inevitably to follow from it.

There is another aspect of the history of nineteenth-century democracy which might be expected to catch the composite eye of the ordinary man. In the early years of the century, when democracy was still a heresy, when it was nowhere in Europe a formula of established Governments or the *Credo* of those in power, it roused in its adherents extraordinary hopes and enthusiasms. We are now so

accustomed to the spectacle of enthusiasm and hope attaching themselves to political and social creeds that we hardly realize that this attitude of democrats towards democracy was something almost entirely new in human history. It dates from and originates in the eighteenth century and the French Revolution. Before the Revolution, in communal psychology the stimulus to passion and to hope was found not in politics but in religion. Certainly for 1700 years no one in Europe, except perhaps an ignorant peasant or two deluded by a Wat Tyler or a Martin Luther, had believed that a path to the millennium might be found in a change of social structure or a transference of political power.¹ No man thought that the Guelfs would make a better world than the Ghibellines or the Red Rose of Lancaster a better world than the White Rose of York. It was not the future, but the immediate present which made a man a Roundhead, which brought back Charles II. to Whitehall, or which turned William of Orange into William III. of England. There is no enthusiasm for a political idea or any conception of social or political salvation in the theorists like Machiavelli or Hobbes or Locke, and if any writer ever tried to imagine a better world, it immediately took form in his mind as an impossible "Utopia". Rousseau was the first to find in sociology and politics what before him men had sought only in religion.

The democrats of the early nineteenth century in France and on the Continent always looked straight back to the French Revolution, "a glorious time, a happy time" when "the Nations hailed their great

¹ A most important exception may perhaps be found in the thinkers and writers of the Puritan Revolution and the Commonwealth, but that exception really strengthens my point, since with them religion is inextricably intertwined with politics.

DEMOCRACY

expectancy". And their eyes always caught something of the radiance of that great expectancy which dazzled Wordsworth into becoming a democrat, while, unlike Wordsworth, having remained democrats, they still kept their hopes high and their belief bright in

Man and his noble nature, as it is
The gift which God has placed within his power,
His blind desires and steady faculties
Capable of clear truth, the one to break
Bondage, the other to build liberty
On firm foundations, making social life,
Through knowledge spreading and imperishable,
As just in regulation, and as pure
As individual in the wise and good.

In England, however, the democrats and radicals looked back, not perhaps directly to the Revolution, but rather, consciously or unconsciously, to the English interpreters of its spirit, to men like Godwin and Paine. They, too, shared those generous beliefs in the perfectibility of man, under free and rational political institutions, which, before Napoleon, had inspired the revolutionary Decrees and had sent revolutionary armies marching across Europe in the crusade for Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.

Thus, whatever may be claimed for or denied to democracy, one thing is certain about its history during the last one hundred and fifty years. Both its opponents and its adherents, those who hated it and those who loved it, in the spring-time of its existence considered it to be of the very greatest importance, whether as a fact or as a principle of human government. Burke and most of its opponents regarded it with the kind of passionate aversion which, in previous ages, devout believers had felt towards the persons and doctrines of heretics. The establishment

of democracy would, they thought, convert what was in most respects an earthly paradise into the blackest of hells, where all the goodness and beauty, the order and decency of civilization would be eternally lost, and human beings would be damned eternally in squalid anarchy. Their fight against this spectre was inspired and sustained by the idealism of a faith and the grim tenacity of men defending their personal possessions. Burke, Pitt, Alexander, Metternich, these are some of the little figures in the ant-heap which, looking back, we now see as organizers of resistance. They raised armies, fought wars, made Holy Alliances, covered Europe with a net-work of repression, filled the prisons and Botany Bay with convicts, and from time to time fired on mobs and stormed barricades. This was the great crusade against democracy which began about 1790 and seemed to contemporaries to end in failure and the revolutions of 1848.

On the other side, the devotion of the democrats was as passionate as the aversion of their opponents. Democracy, they believed, would convert what was in many respects the blackest of hells into an earthly paradise where goodness and beauty, a decent and ordered civilization, would flourish eternally, and all men, released from the squalid tyranny of the old order, would be able to enjoy and bestow the blessings of reason, equality, and freedom.

To-day these fears, hopes, passions, enthusiasms have vanished; the attitude of the world towards democracy has changed. It may, as some believe, be only a temporary phenomenon, but it is at any rate significant and deserves investigation. Most of the opponents of democracy—and all the intelligent ones—have lost their fear of it. Indeed, as was pointed out above, they have become some of its

most stalwart supporters. Perhaps the change is not unconnected with another, to be noticed presently—the change in democrats from hope and enthusiasm to doubt and disappointment. If the earthly paradise and the hell on earth remain pretty much as they were before the establishment of democracy, this would account for the conversion of its opponents and the disappointment of its adherents. At any rate, a large number of those who to-day are among the staunchest democrats, would, had they been born a hundred years earlier, have hated and feared it with Alexander I. and Metternich. And even those who to-day *are* its critics and opponents can hardly be said to hate and fear it. They are Bolsheviks and socialists who, had they been born one hundred years earlier, would have been Jacobins and enthusiastic democrats, or intellectual aristocrats like Mr. Mencken of America, or Nietzschean fatalists like Herr Spengler of Germany. The grounds of their criticism and opposition are different; their emotional attitude is the same—not hate or fear, but contempt.

The attitude of the true and faithful believer has also changed during the last hundred years. The passion of courtship and the honeymoon have passed, and in its place is the sober and sombre relationship formed by the knowledge and experiences of a long married life. In the United States of America and among “subject races” there are still people who see democracy through the eyes of William Godwin or Tom Paine as a magic key to Utopia, but elsewhere democrats defend democracy with a lack of enthusiasm which seems to come from a foreboding of failure, and their claims for it are often so low as to be little better than apologies.

That democracy should have finally triumphed in

POLITICAL COMMUNAL PSYCHOLOGY

1918 and be reckoned to have failed in 1928; that its staunchest supporters should be on the Right and its most virulent opponents on the Left; that the dominating political idea of the nineteenth century should, early in the twentieth, be regarded contemptuously or apologetically; all these are curious facts which the student of communal political psychology must investigate and endeavour to explain. With this end in view, I propose first to examine "democracy" as a political idea; secondly to examine the history of democracy during the last century, in order to determine, if possible, the extent to which the idea of democracy has actually been applied and became operative; and thirdly to trace the connection, if any, between democracy and the war.

THE DEMOCRACY OF THE EARLY DEMOCRATS

What the early democrats meant by democracy as a political idea and what the democratic form of government was which they proposed to establish, are questions happily not difficult to determine. Some great historical events are so gradual in their onset and others, like the war, are so complex that it is extremely difficult to determine the causal relations, if any, or even to see in what direction contemporaries imagined that they were impelling events or hoped to impel them. But this is not the case with nineteenth-century democracy. Its onset began in two cataclysmic events, the American and the French Revolutions. In each case, those responsible for the crucial actions which made these events inevitable explained to the world, at the very moment when they acted, their reasons and objects and the political and metaphysical theories by which they justified their actions. The American Declara-

tion of Independence of 1776 and the *Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen* by the French National Assembly in 1789 are proclamations to the world by the first democrats defining the democratic form of government which they seek to set up, the reasons why such a form of government is rational and desirable, and the blessings which may be expected to result from it. In no particular were these men more revolutionarily democratic than in thus giving their reasons for being democrats and for taking a political action. Since that date we have become so accustomed to governments, statesmen, and politicians being expected, and even required, to justify their existence and their policies by principles, reasons, prophecies, and performances that we forget that anything of the kind was practically unheard of before 1776. In a society where political power is held to depend upon birth, property, and privilege, reason and political principles are usually dangerous, unnecessary, and irrational. If power is property and belongs to a man because he is the Vicegerent or Anointed of God or because he is the son of his father, the most important political principle is *beati possidentes*, and political questions turn on theology, paternity, and legitimacy. No king has ever argued or given reasons unless faced by imminent danger of having his head cut off by his subjects, and the theory of the Divine Right of Kings was only invented as an answer to people who began to treat monarchs as ordinary, rational human beings. The communal political psychology of aristocracies and oligarchies is, in this respect, similar to that of monarchies where the oligarchy is one of birth, or political power is the property of a class. There the ultimate political questions are questions of paternity or property, not of reason or expediency. No doubt, as many political

philosophers have already observed, there is in the masses a limit of endurance, a high-water mark of suffering, which their rulers have to respect and which separates what is euphemistically called "consent" from what is legally deemed rebellion. But the limit is high, and, provided that the owners of power respect it, they can do what they like without being called upon to show that their actions are reasonable or desirable. A Roman emperor, a feudal monarch, a Queen Elizabeth, or a Louis XIV. treated his kingdom and subjects exactly as a man now treats his money at the bank or his estate; he accepts his rights unconsciously and assumes that others will respect them; he does not argue about them or explain his actions. A "Whig" or "Tory" oligarchy in the eighteenth century was in the same position and acted in precisely the same way. We have noted in a previous chapter the absence of political ideas from the heads of ordinary eighteenth-century Englishmen, and historians have remarked with some astonishment that there was a complete absence of real "politics" in elections in the middle of that century.¹ There is nothing astonishing in the fact. In 1750 political power was simply property, either inheritable or purchasable, and therefore its use was not explained or defended by appeals to reason. There was no more a place for real politics at the election of 1760 than there was at the election of a Roman emperor.

After a century and a half these Declarations of 1776 and 1789 are a little blown upon: the high-sounding phrases sound somewhat blowsy and the philosophy is faded; their withered beauty is an easy butt for ridicule. But their mere existence is of immense

¹ See L. B. Namier, *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III.*, 1929, *et seq.* vol. I. p. 128.

DEMOCRACY

significance. It points to a fundamental difference in the psychology of democracy. The democrat maintains that the legitimacy and authority of governments must depend upon right, justice, and reason, that the whole political system must be defensible metaphysically and ethically as well as legally, and that every political action is wrong unless it can be shown to be rational and communally expedient, just, and desirable. We are to-day so accustomed to this communal psychology that we do not realize how rarely it has been operative in the world's history. It existed for a moment in ancient Greece when the Athenian statesman had to convince his hearers daily in the market-place that what he was doing was rational and expedient. In nearly all other places and periods throughout man's history no political action could be called in question if it could be shown to be willed by a particular person or persons who had "inherited" or purchased that strange and valuable property, political power.

The impulse to state their case and to argue in those who published the Declarations of 1776 and 1789 was a sound one. It showed that they were democrats and marked the birth of modern democracy. They were asking the world to accept the first postulate of democracy: that a prosperous and civilized society of rational human beings is possible only if the political organization is determined by justice, reason, and expediency. Those who framed the Declarations also stated certain secondary postulates of democracy and gave an outline of that form of government and political organization which they proposed to establish upon these postulates. Before examining them, a word must be said with regard to the relation between the two Declarations.

POLITICAL COMMUNAL PSYCHOLOGY

The European democrat of the nineteenth century always looked back for his inspiration to the French Revolution, and in doing so his historical instinct was right. Yet modern democracy was really born in America thirteen years before the States-General met in Paris. In the previous chapter, when I was examining the communal political psychology of Frenchmen immediately before the Revolution, I noted that the number of democrats, in the modern sense, was very small; the *philosophes* and their disciples thought in terms of civil rather than of political liberty and they became consciously democrats only after they had invented European democracy. That they invented European democracy so rapidly was mainly due to the fact that American democracy had been invented thirteen years before. A vague and spasmodic acceptance of the postulates of democracy seems to have been indigenous in Britain from very early times, and any attempt by the Government to override them too drastically has been sufficient to rouse into activity latent beliefs and desires with regard to political liberty. The Resolution of the House of Commons of January 6, 1649, quoted at the beginning of this chapter, shows that there were conscious democrats in England long before the birth of democracy. The seventeenth century in this country was one of those periods in which the political matrix is profoundly modified and the seeds of strange ideas are sown in the communal psychology. In opposition to the dominating idea that political power is the privilege or personal property of individuals or classes, there sprang up two other ideas which were inconsistent, the idea that "good and religious men had a right to rule the evil and irreligious", and the idea that "the nation ought to be governed according to the wishes of its representa-

tives in Parliament".¹ Both these doctrines were carried from England to America by the ancestors of those who gave to the world the Declaration of Independence, and the history of the United States between the sailing of the *Mayflower* and 1760 cannot be understood unless it is observed that the seed of theocracy was implicit in Massachusetts and of democracy in Plymouth.

People have often believed in, and founded their political systems on, the idea that strong men or royal men or aristocratic men or landowning men should rule, or that rich men should rule poor men, or even that wise men should rule fools, but people have rarely believed that good men should rule, and still more rarely have they attempted to translate such a political theory into political practice. The seventeenth-century doctrine can be traced to the Reformation and particularly to Calvinism. It had a peculiar appeal to "the Jacobean Englishmen of middle station, half-way between the aristocrat and the burgess", who settled in Massachusetts Bay. These men had nothing in common with the Levelers who were responsible for the Resolution of 1649 and are the First Fathers of modern democracy. They had been born and bred in English villages "where gentlemen ruled and the people obeyed"; the relations between gentlemen and others might be different in Massachusetts Bay from what they had been in a Suffolk village, but in the mind of a John Winthrop or John Cotton they certainly could not be democratic. That they became theocratic was due to the fact that the founders of the Massachusetts colony were Puritans and Presbyterians, *i.e.* that they

¹ See S. R. Gardiner, *History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate, 1649-1660*, vol. i. p. 32 (1894), and J. R. Tanner, *English Constitutional Conflicts of the Seventeenth Century, 1603-1689*, p. 160 (1928).

thought that society in seventeenth-century England and America should be regulated in accordance with the beliefs and ideals of Semitic tribes who had lived two or three thousand years earlier in Palestine, and in accordance with the interpretation of the Hebraic ordinances by a ruthless Swiss legislator of the sixteenth century. Naturally these men held that political power was a prerogative of goodness, that goodness was a prerogative of their orthodox Puritan Church, and that there was more righteousness in the upper ranks of society than in the lower. John Cotton, one of the most influential members of the Massachusetts colony, gives the clearest exposition of the political theory upon which they based their system of government. "To found an Hebraic State", writes an American historian,¹ "in which political rights should be subordinate to religious conformity, in which the magistrates should be chosen from a narrow group, with authority beyond the reach of the popular will, and with the ministers serving as court of last resort to interpret the divine law to the citizen-subjects of Jehovah—this was the great ambition of John Cotton; and the untiring zeal and learned scriptural authority which he dedicated to that ambition justify us in regarding him as the greatest of the New England theocrats. In the categories of the Puritan philosophy of ethical stewardship there was no recognition of the profane doctrine of natural rights. Freedom was the prerogative of righteousness; the well-being of society required that the sinner should remain subject to the Saint. Nowhere does he lay down this principle more unmistakably than in an important state paper."²

¹ Vernon Louis Parrington, *Main Currents in American Thought*, vol. i. "The Colonial Mind, 1620-1800," p. 33 (1927).

² Hutchinson, *History of Massachusetts Bay Colony*, vol. i. Appendix 2.

DEMOCRACY

Now if it be a divine truth, that none are to be trusted with public permanent authority but godly men, who are fit materials for church membership, then from the same grounds it will appear, that none are so fit to be trusted with the liberties of the commonwealth as church members. For, the liberties of this commonwealth are such, as require men of faithful integrity to God and state, to preserve the same. . . . Now . . . these liberties are such as carry along much power with them, either to establish or subvert the commonwealth, and therewith the church, which power, if it be committed to men according to their godliness . . . then, in case worldly men should prove the major part, as soon they might do, they would readily set over us magistrates like themselves, such as might . . . turn the edge of all authority and laws against the church and the members thereof, the maintenance of whose peace is the chief end which God aimed at in the institution of magistracy."

But the idea that "good and religious men had a right to rule the evil and irreligious" was not the only revolutionary political principle that was carried from seventeenth-century England to America by the founders of New England. To Plymouth the *Mayflower* brought men who would certainly not have disputed the statement that "the People are, under God, the original of all just power", and even in Massachusetts there were from very early times those who held that political power should belong to a democracy of equal citizens rather than to an aristocracy of the righteous. It is significant that the fiery Roger Williams who soon came into conflict with John Cotton and the authorities in Boston was a Leveller. The notion, spread by his adversaries and repeated by historians—it reappears in *The Cambridge Modern History*—that he was little more than "a haberdasher of small questions against the power" is absurd; there is

much more to be said for Mr. Parrington's view that "he was primarily a political philosopher rather than a theologian—one of the acutest and most searching of his generation of Englishmen, the teacher of Vane and Cromwell and Milton, a forerunner of Locke and the natural-rights school, one of the notable democratic thinkers that the English race has produced". Many of the theories and beliefs which a hundred and fifty years later were to become the postulates of modern democracy are to be found in Williams. His system is incompatible with a State in which political power is a privilege of birth, station, property, or righteousness. The State and Government are founded in the consent of free and equal citizens. "The Sovereign Power of all civill Authority", he said, "is founded in the consent of the People that every Commonwealth hath radically and fundamentally."¹ And in another passage he wrote:²

From this *Grant* I infer . . . that the *Soveraigne*, originall, and foundation of civill power lies in the *People*. . . . And if so, that a *People* may erect and establish what *forme* of *Government* seemes to them most meete for their *civill condition*: It is evident that such *Governments* as are by them erected and established, have no more *power*, nor for no longer time, than the *civill power* or people consenting and agreeing shall betrust them with. This is cleere not only in *Reason*, but in the experience of all *commonweales*, where the people are not deprived of their naturall freedom by the power of Tyrants.

It was this political psychology of the House of Commons Resolution of 1649, of the Plymouth Pilgrims, and of Roger Williams rather than that

¹ *Narragansett Club Publications*, vol. iii. pp. 214, 355, 366, quoted by V. L. Parrington, *op. cit.* p. 69.

² *The Bloody Tenent*, quoted by V. L. Parrington, *op. cit.* p. 70.

of Cotton and the Massachusetts theocrats which established itself in New England. As we shall see later, the strange conception that "none are to be trusted with public permanent authority but godly men" has never completely died out of the communal psychology; it has had a persistent influence upon the theory of democracy; it can be traced in the modern versions of the old adage "Vox populi vox Dei", in the unquestioned conviction of nineteenth-century democrats that some peculiar, almost divine, goodness and wisdom are inherent in "the common people". It seems as if men, reluctant to abandon the vision of a world ruled by the righteous for the reality of a world ruled by the majority, unconsciously consoled themselves with the curious assumption that a majority is always and necessarily righteous. But this amalgamation or transformation of political doctrine came much later. In the eighteenth century circumstances, culminating in the constitutional struggle between the American colonists and the English Government, firmly established the idea of the people's sovereignty as the ultimate principle of politics and therefore the foundation of democracy.

The battle between England and what was to become the United States of America was fought over this principle. The first definite and conscious annunciation of the full-blooded modern doctrine of democracy was made in the Virginian Declaration of Rights in May 1776, and in its more famous corollary the Declaration of Independence of July 4, 1776. The French Revolution came thirteen years later. Many of the leaders in that revolution had been deeply influenced by the American example and doctrines, and the *Déclaration des droits de l'homme* bears the marks of that influence. But

whereas the American Declaration is all of a piece—the piece being political democracy—the French *Déclaration* is a patchwork and shows the two minds of its authors. The American Revolution was a political and constitutional revolution; it was concerned with the question of the ultimate repository of political power. The French Revolution arose from a much more profound dislocation between the social structure and the social development of France in the eighteenth century, as we have seen in a previous chapter. Up to the time of the American Revolution the *philosophes* and reformers were concerned with problems of privilege and civil liberty rather than with those of political power. But in the thirteen years which followed, the American example and the principles proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence turned the minds of many Frenchmen in the direction of modern political democracy. The first to be affected were men, like Lafayette and the Vicomte de Noailles, who had seen for themselves the birth of democracy in the United States, and in some cases had fought for it as auxiliaries. The influence of these men was very great in Paris in the early days of the Revolution, and the struggle over the States General and the position of the *tiers état* immediately concentrated attention upon the question of the ultimate repository of political power.¹

The *Déclaration des droits de l'homme* was inspired by the example of America; it was drawn up on American models. In its final form it was based upon a draft of Lafayette, and its wording had been discussed with Jefferson, Minister of the United

¹ For the influence of America upon France during this period, see B. Fay, *L'Esprit révolutionnaire en France et aux États-Unis*, 1925, particularly chapter iv.

States in Paris, who, as Chairman of the Committee of Congress, had himself made the first draft of the American Declaration of Independence. Its resemblances to its American model and to other American declarations of the "natural rights" of men are, therefore, striking, but the differences are also important and reflect the difference between the communal psychology of the two continents. The American Declaration is an extremely short and simple document; it goes straight to a single point, the right form and legitimate powers of the Government. The French Declaration is a long and complicated document; it has two themes, one the American theme of the form and powers of Government, the other a French theme of social distinctions, privileges, and civil liberty. Its authors seem to be in two minds, distracted between their desire to follow the strictly political lines of their American model and the insistence of those other problems of personal and social privilege and civil liberties. It is only with difficulty that, in the first six articles, they can keep their attention partially concentrated upon the theme of political power and the organization of government. Even in Article I. the two themes are heard in its two sentences. The first sentence, "*Les hommes naissent et demeurent libres et égaux en droits*", repeats the exordium of the American Declaration, "We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with inalienable rights; that among these rights are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness". But the second sentence, "*Les distinctions sociales ne peuvent être fondées que sur l'utilité commune*", has nothing to answer to it in the American model. After Article VI. the American model is completely abandoned,

and the French theme of civil liberty becomes dominant.

The difference between the two declarations is not merely an academic and historical fact. Those who drew up the declaration of August 1789 were stating the articles of their political faith; for the better part of a century their words were looked back to as the apostolic expression of the beliefs and desires of democracy. Thus in Europe, from the very beginning, democracy was parti-coloured; it was not merely a statement of the right method of regulating the exercise of political power; it included in its articles of political faith statements as to the right method of regulating the arrest and detention of accused persons, of regulating legal pains and penalties, of regulating judicial procedure, the police force, the expression of opinion, religion, and taxation. This has led to an ambiguity in democratic thought and often an uncertainty and confusion in democratic practice. It is not theoretically certain that the democratic regulation of the exercise of political power will be accompanied by religious toleration and freedom of speech, and experience has shown that even under an advanced political democracy, with universal suffrage, the individual may find little protection for his right to be presumed innocent until he is proved guilty, his right not to be knocked about by the police, his right not to be interfered with because of his religious or irreligious opinions, or his right to communicate his thoughts and opinions to his fellow-citizens. The confusion in democratic thought has arisen from the fact that democrats have so often not made up their minds whether they believe that political democracy will by its nature protect civil liberties or that the protection of civil liberties ought to accompany political democracy.

DEMOCRACY

We are now in a position to examine more closely what the early democrats meant by democracy as a political idea and the democratic form of government which they proposed to establish. Ostensibly they began from a trinity of metaphysical postulates. They maintained that all men are born equal and endowed with two fundamental rights, the right to liberty and the right to happiness.

American Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with inalienable rights; that among these rights are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. . . ."

Déclaration des droits de l'homme: "Les hommes naissent et demeurent libres et égaux en droits. . . . Ces droits (naturels et imprescriptibles de l'homme) sont la liberté, la prospérité . . ."

The sole object of government is the protection of these rights, or, to put it in another way, since these rights are summed up in the happiness of equal human units, the sole object of government and of all political associations is the common benefit of a community of equal citizens.

American Declaration of Independence: "To secure these rights governments are instituted among men".

Déclaration des droits de l'homme: "Le but de toute association politique est la conservation des droits naturels et imprescriptibles de l'homme". (And subject to what has been said above, "Les distinctions sociales ne peuvent être fondées que sur l'utilité commune".)

DEMOCRACY AND HAPPINESS

It will be noted that in their declarations of political faith the early democrats stated the proposition that the sole object of government is the common

benefit of the community as a corollary of the proposition that men are born equal and with a right to happiness. Now the idea that the object of government and of political association is the happiness of a community of individuals in which each has an equal right to happiness is an immensely important one which has very rarely been accepted in principle and has never been translated into practice in the world's history. The fact that it was stated by democrats as a corollary of metaphysical beliefs has had a considerable effect upon the subsequent history of democracy. During the last hundred years the libraries have been filled with books whose authors beat the air with arguments for or against the equality of man. Even in 1928 the American aristocrat Mr. Mencken¹ can still delude himself and congratulate himself that he has kicked away the foundations for a rational belief in democracy, when he has proved that all men are not equal. The psychological discoveries of MM⁴. Simon and Binet and the sedulous investigations of intelligence testers have proved that one girl can cross out the a's in a line more accurately and more quickly than another, and that the population of the United States consists largely of morons, outnumbering those born with the intelligence of a Mr. Mencken in the ratio of perhaps 500,000 to 1. "All men are *not* alike," says Mr. Mencken triumphantly, "and very little can be learned about the mental processes of a congressman, an ice-wagon driver, or a cinema actor by studying the mental processes of a genuinely superior man." And if the majority of men have the mental processes of an ice-wagon driver and are shown by the new psychologists to be incapable of being raised by education to the mental level of a genuinely superior man, we have destroyed the

¹ See *Notes to Democracy*, pp. 1-29.

fundamental postulate of democracy, and we can throw up our hats for aristocracy and James II. of England or the Whigs or Mussolini or General Primo de Rivera—if we do not raise the Red Flag and worship the mummified body of Vladimir Ulianov Lenin in a glass case.

Whether the proposition "all men are equal" is a fundamental postulate for a rational belief in democracy is by no means a simple question. The whole problem had been muddled and muddled by the ambiguity of the proposition itself. But whatever meaning may be attached to it, it is not a necessary postulate for the belief which is the real foundation of democracy, that the sole object of government is the common benefit of a community of equal citizens. Neither the early democrats nor their spiritual descendants were all logical and consistent thinkers, and, like the members of other sects and parties, they did not always use the same words in the same sense. There can be discovered among them an almost infinite variety of interpretations of their belief that all men are equal and that government should exist only for the common benefit of equal citizens. Nevertheless it is possible to find in the communal psychology of the early democrats an interpretation of this belief regarding the object of government which is common to them all as democrats and may therefore be regarded as the foundation of democracy. When they said that the object of government is the common benefit of a community of equal citizens, they meant that (1) every class within the community has politically the same right to happiness as every other class and every individual the same right to happiness as every other individual; (2) the equality of the citizens consists primarily in their equal rights to liberty and happiness and secondarily in their right to equality

before the law, a right which will have to be discussed later.¹

This notion of an equal right to happiness in all classes and persons was a revolutionary political principle. When Bentham wrote that "the happiness of the worst man of the species is as much an integrant of the whole mass of human happiness as is that of the best man", he was saying something which, as M. Halévy points out in his *La Formation du Radicalisme philosophique*, was, to his contemporaries little known and rather shocking. The idea was revolutionary, not only because it made the happiness of a bad man and of a low man politically important, not only because it established the fact that the first duty of a government was to ensure the happiness of the whole community, but also because it was contradictory of a conception of society in which the happiness of common men had no political claims against property and privilege.

It is important to understand the revolution in communal psychology produced by this doctrine, underlying democracy, as to the relation between happiness and politics or social organization. Before the nineteenth century the organization of every society which had so far existed presupposed that happiness was a graded commodity and that different grades and quantities of happiness belonged by nature or privilege to different classes of the community. Communal psychology was reflected in these institutions and endorsed them. Communal psychology does not normally consist of formulated theory or systematized beliefs, but of instinctive mental attitudes. The mental attitude of the civilized, intelligent, humane Greek or Roman towards slavery shows the relation between happiness and

¹ See p. 279.

DEMOCRACY

politics in the communal psychology of classical times. The Athenian, who pushed his own form of democracy to the utmost limits, knew instinctively that the idea of a slave having politically the same right to happiness as a free man was ridiculous. Somehow or other the free Athenian had a right to be happy; the slave had not the same right to happiness or any right to the same happiness. In relation to happiness he stood where the animal did or the woman; for happiness was socially and politically a privilege of the free man, not of the free woman. Of course, being a humane Athenian, he desired that the old dog Argos on the dung-heap and the swineherd Eumaeus in his hut and the woman Penelope at her loom should all be happy, but their happiness was a particular, limited, and inferior commodity compared with his own, and a commodity not to be socially or politically recognized.

This kind of attitude towards communal happiness has been absolutely universal in history down to the other day. That a serf should have the same kind and quantity of happiness as a knight would have seemed a fantastic idea to anyone in the Middle Ages. In the eighteenth century it would have seemed fantastic to suggest that the happiness of the "lower orders" was as much an integrant part of the whole mass of human happiness as that of the aristocracy. Before the nineteenth century practically no one conceived that the happiness of a woman counted the same as the happiness of a man within the body-politic.

When the democrats proclaimed that everyone had socially an equal and "inalienable right to the pursuit of happiness", they laid the foundations for one of the greatest social, political, and psycho-

logical revolutions that the world had known. Happiness, it is generally agreed, depends on the enjoyment of both material and mental things. An adequate income, a nice house, pleasant things to eat and drink, fine clothes, a barouche and spinet in one generation or a motor-car and gramophone in another, a garden, travel, leisure, and conversation, a university education, an interesting profession, the ability to understand and therefore the opportunity to enjoy a poem of Donne or a Quartet of Beethoven—these are the things which the profoundest philosophers and the most acute thinkers and observers agree are important ingredients in human happiness. To-day there are millions of people in the world who instinctively, unconsciously believe that none of these ingredients of happiness are by right the particular property of particular persons or classes, but should be possessed and enjoyed by all persons and all classes. Writers on democracy have not paid sufficient attention to the fact that before the nineteenth century at no period of the world's history did anyone believe any such thing; that on the contrary everyone believed the exact opposite; and that this revolution in communal psychology can be traced to the fundamental proposition in the American Declaration of Independence, and so to the fundamental doctrine of modern democracy.

This difference in communal psychology is so curious and important that it is necessary to examine it somewhat in detail. Observe, for instance, Miss Hannah More in 1801, a woman who devoted her life to philanthropy and good works, but who, born in 1745 and living at Cowslip Green, had not felt in her own mind the winds which were blowing about the world from 1776 and 1789. In 1801 there was a

famine in the west country, and the poor suffered severely in the villages round about Cowslip Green. Miss Hannah More addressed the poor women of Shipham with regard to the famine in the following words:

It is with real concern that I am obliged to touch upon the subject which made part of my address to you last year. You will guess I allude to the continuation of the scarcity. Yet, let me remind you that probably that very scarcity has been permitted by an all-wise and gracious Providence to unite all ranks of people together, to show the poor how immediately they are dependent upon the rich, and to show both rich and poor that they are all dependent on Himself. It has also enabled you to see more clearly the advantages you desire from the government and constitution of this country—to observe the benefits flowing from the distinction of rank and fortune, which has enabled the high so liberally to assist the low: for I leave you to judge what would have been the state of the poor of this country in this long, distressing scarcity had it not been for your superiors. I wish you to understand also that you are not the only sufferers. You have indeed borne your share, and a very heavy one it has been in the late difficulties; but it has fallen in some degree on all ranks, nor would the gentry have been able to afford such large supplies to the distresses of the poor, had they not denied themselves, for your sakes, many indulgences to which their fortune at other times entitles them. We trust the poor in general, especially those that are well instructed, have received what has been done for them as a matter of favour, not of right—if so, the same kindness will, I doubt not, always be extended to them, whenever it shall please God so to afflict the land.”¹

The democrat and, still more, the communist of the twentieth century who happened to come across this passage would almost certainly see in this lecture

¹ Quoted J. L. and Barbara Hammond, *The Town Labourer, 1760-1832*, p. 229.

to starving women of the proletariat a subject worthy of his ridicule or indignant self-righteousness. But ridicule and indignation and self-righteousness, though proper in their place, will not really help one to understand the psychology of the maiden lady who lived at Cowslip Green, a friend of Edmund Burke and Dr. Johnson and Horace Walpole, or to understand the communal psychology of which the fluttering mind of Hannah More was a part. No one to-day would dare to lecture starving working women and tell them that they have no right to be saved from starvation; that if they are given food by the rich it is a favour and a kindness for which they should be humbly thankful; that the middle and upper classes have a right to "many indulgences" and that, if they voluntarily deny themselves luxuries, their sufferings are equivalent to starvation in the working classes; that famine and starvation have shown them the blessings of a social system in which some are so poor that they starve and others are so rich that they can save the poor from starvation; and that if only they show themselves sufficiently grateful for the blessings of the famine that is past, God will reward them with still more famines in the future. The reason why Hannah More, the friend of Burke, Johnson, and Walpole, could think and say these things in 1801, while Lady X and Mrs. Y cannot say or even think these things in 1929, is not that Hannah More was more stupid or more wicked than Lady X and Mrs. Y are, but that the matrix of communal psychology had moulded her mind in one way, while it has moulded theirs in another. Hannah More's attitude towards society was completely inconsistent with any idea that the poor women of Shiphham had an equal and inalienable right to the same kind of happiness as

that which belonged by right and in fact to their "superiors"; it never crossed her mind for instance that those luxuries which in normal times formed part of the happiness of the superiors could possibly be enjoyed by the inferiors. If such an idea had ever entered her mind, she would have immediately felt it to be morally wrong that the members of inferior classes should claim or enjoy the happiness peculiar to their superiors. You can still see the mind of Hannah More persisting in the attitude of the middle classes, now rapidly dying out but common twenty or thirty years ago, towards domestic servants. The claim of cooks and housemaids to lead the same kind of lives as other people, to enjoy leisure or even to play the piano, roused ridicule or moral indignation, not merely because the claim was inconvenient, but because it also seemed to be inappropriate.¹ The reason was that domestic servants and women were the last classes to claim successfully the equal right to happiness enunciated by the democrats of 1776.

It would be absurd to pretend that the first demo-

¹ The nineteenth-century middle-class disapproval of the lower-class piano exactly reproduces the eighteenth-century upper-class disapproval of the middle-class piano. In *Annals*, vol. xvii. pp. 156-7 (quoted in Ivy Pinchbeck, *Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850*, p. 35), Arthur Young wrote:

"I see sometimes, for instance, a pianoforte in a farmer's parlour, which I always wish burnt; a livery servant is sometimes found, and a post-chaise to carry their daughters to assemblies, these ladies are sometimes educated at expensive boarding-schools, and the sons at the University, to be made parsons, but all these things imply a departure from that line which separates these different orders of beings; let these things, and all the folly, foppery, expence, and anxiety that belong to them, remain among gentlemen. A wise farmer will not envy them."

It is obvious that Arthur Young considers different varieties of happiness appropriate to different orders of beings. The happiness to be obtained from music and a good education is appropriate to the order of gentlemen's daughters, but not to the order of farmers' daughters.

crats fully understood the implications in this doctrine that everyone has an equal right to the pursuit of happiness; far less did they foresee the changes in the structure and texture of society to which, if applied, it must inevitably lead. But their instinct was sound in making it the foundation of democracy. Anyone who takes an analytically psychological view of history will see that this doctrine has been the most active, violent, and subtle agent in democratizing society. It translates itself easily in the individual from a belief into a desire, from "I, Tom Paine, exciseman and tobacconist of Lewes, have the same right to pursue happiness as Charles, 10th Duke of Norfolk, of Arundel Castle" into "I, Tom Paine, desire A and B and C (and I have the same right to them politically and socially as Charles, 10th Duke of Norfolk)". Thus the political and social belief is rapidly broadened into an instinctive, unconscious attitude towards society: "We all have an equal right to the good things of life", which perpetually receives encouragement from the powerful emotions of cupidity and envy. Where the eighteenth century and all the centuries which preceded it had felt instinctively that this kind of life, this kind of happiness, and this kind of commodity are naturally the monopoly, privilege, and property of class A or individual Z, whereas an inferior kind of life and happiness and commodities are reserved for class B or individual Y, the nineteenth century began to feel instinctively that something was wrong if class B or individual Y had not the same kind of life, the same kind of happiness, and the same kind of commodities as class A and individual Z.

In the growth and the effects of this belief in the democratization of happiness it is possible to study an important example of that complicated modifica-

tion of communal psychology and the structure of society to which only a general and superficial reference was made in Chapter II. of Part I. Like a rough stone into the smooth and polished mirror of a pond, this idea that all men have an equal right to happiness fell into the minds of a few Englishmen and Frenchmen of the eighteenth century, and immediately out went the ripples, up and down, criss-crossing, agitating the surface of men's minds and of society, revealing the commotion down in the depths. For the idea was inconsistent with the structure of society and the communal psychology of the time. There can be no equal right to happiness in a society like that of eighteenth-century France and England, described in a previous chapter, in which the class structure is extremely rigid and defined and in which political power is a privilege or property. The conflict between a belief in such right and the acceptance of such a social and political system was inevitable. When the clash came it produced a crop of new political beliefs which we now call democracy (to be examined later), the American and French Revolutions, and that movement, persistent through the nineteenth century, to "widen the base of political power", which deep down will be found to spring from a communal desire to prevent political power being used by classes or persons to maintain a monopoly of happiness.

But before the open clash came, with its class conflict and political struggles, the idea itself can be observed moving in devious ways in the minds of individual men and in the communal consciousness, and after the clash it may again be observed moving uneasily in men's minds, changing their attitude towards all kinds of facts and institutions and beliefs, and itself being modified or changed by the new

structure of society which it had helped to create. Before we go on to examine its direct influence upon the theory and practice of political democracy it is worth while to observe some of these other outcroppings of the idea, for it is only thus that one can understand the place which it has gradually come to occupy in communal psychology.

The idea did not spring straight from the heads of Jefferson and other American patriots into the Declaration of Independence. Before the eighteenth century in Europe people were not much concerned with the problem of happiness. The problem indeed hardly existed. There was communal misery in full measure, for man has always possessed and exercised a remarkable faculty of making himself and his fellows miserable by means of war, persecution, religion, poverty, crime, law and political institutions. But in the Middle Ages, at the Renaissance, and all through the seventeenth century, even when they were not happy, people were not acutely conscious of unhappiness. The difference is profound and can be seen very clearly in writers, from poets and dramatists to letter-writers, diarists, and philosophers. There were pessimists before Montesquieu, but before him and the *philosophes*, Voltaire and Rousseau, no writer, however pessimistic, makes one feel that the world is for him permanently and on a great scale "out of joint". They accepted unhappiness, the colossal communal miseries inflicted by man's own stupidities, as an animal accepts pain and, when it comes, death in a dark corner. Even an Erasmus and a Montaigne, who were not inferior in intelligence and sensibility to the most civilized men of any age, while seeing, deploring, condemning the evils and horrors of their time, accepted them; the harmony between their own minds and the order into which

they were born and the society in which they lived was deep and subtle. In the case of less intelligent and less sensitive men the harmony was simpler and deeper. Famine, brutality, and ignorance; the tyranny of kings and nobles; the persecutions of priests; torture, exactions, burnings; battle, murder, and sudden death—these are in the order of things, and from these one can but say, "Good Lord, deliver us". It has been known these 3000 years and more that "man that is born of woman is of few days, and full of trouble". But no one was unhappy over these terrestrial unhappinesses, and, if anyone cried "Woe! Woe!" it was prophets or puritans, like Bunyan, who were troubled by the wickedness of men in snatching such happiness as they could from these few days, full of trouble.

Already with Montesquieu in France and Swift in England one sees a new attitude developing towards the self-inflicted evils of mankind. In manners no two men could have been more different, the one being a nobleman who happened to be a genius and the other a genius who happened not to be a gentleman. Yet the *Lettres persanes* says politely what *Gulliver* says savagely. Both look at human society in a new way, making reason the test. Rabelais and Erasmus before them may be said to have done the same, but not in their spirit; they laugh at particular follies and abuses, accepting the framework of society and rejecting only some particularly foolish and evil things within it. Montesquieu and Swift, by pretending to accept everything, accept nothing. They hold up before the world in which they live a mirror of reason and humanity, and ask us to share with them their contempt or horror at the spectacle of what is reflected in it. The world is full of evils and stupidities and miseries, they say, but what a different world it would be if only men

were rational and humane, like the Persians, or the Houyhnhnms.

The new attitude towards happiness and unhappiness is implicit in Montesquieu and Swift. It becomes defined and extraordinarily conscious in the later *philosophes* and Rousseau. Its natural manifestation was the humanitarianism of the eighteenth century which paved the way to democracy and to the humanitarianism of the nineteenth century which was itself so closely connected with the democratic movement. It is significant that what was humanism in Erasmus became humanitarianism in Voltaire. The humanist thinks of culture, the humanitarian of happiness and unhappiness. Voltaire all his life was obsessed and revolted by the spectacle of a world in which so much pain and suffering are inflicted upon its inhabitants, not only by the inevitable forces of nature, but by the superstition, injustice, stupidity, and ferocity of man or of human institutions. His life was a constant war on unhappiness, a crusade to make the world as happy a place as possible. He fought the same battle in the Calas case as in *Candide*, and when, as in the Lisbon earthquake, no battle was possible, because Nature herself had stepped in with her senseless slaying and torture of multitudes, the horror of it made him ill and he went to bed with a high fever. Voltaire is a humanitarian with both feet in the eighteenth century; Rousseau is a humanitarian with one foot in the eighteenth and the other in the nineteenth century. He, too, is obsessed by the problem of happiness and unhappiness, but like so many modern humanitarians—and that is why one of his feet was in the nineteenth century—he was led to the contemplation of communal misery by a keen consciousness of his own. "The clue to Rousseau's works", says Mr.

Kingsley Martin,¹ "is his own psychological history. Each of Rousseau's attacks on the existing social system, each of the remedies he proposed for its transformation, sprang from his own passionate misery and his consciousness of the misery of others". Already in his first work, the *Discours* which won the prize of the Académie de Dijon in 1750, he insisted upon the wretchedness of contemporary life—"les soupçons, les ombrages, les craintes, la froideur, la réserve, la haine, la trahison"—and insisted that this misery and corruption were the results of civilization. In the *Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité parmi les hommes*, which he wrote three years later, he describes society as a system by which "un enfant commande à un vieillard, un imbécile conduise un homme sage, et une poignée de gens regorge de superfluités, tandis que la multitude affamée manque du nécessaire", and he maintained that the root of the evil was the institution of property. The *Du contrat social*, in its famous opening sentence, strikes the same pessimistic note, and in the *Confessions* one can see the psychological stages which lead from self-pity through social (if not cosmic) pessimism to humanitarianism.

The psychology of Voltaire and Rousseau shows how thin the dividing line is between this kind of humanitarianism and the fundamental tenet of democracy. If, both with your intellect and with your feelings, you are keenly conscious of the unhappiness of human beings, if you hold that a vast amount of this misery is unnecessary, being due to the unjust and irrational social and political system, you are only a step from the revolutionary doctrine that society should be ordered according to the

¹ Kingsley Martin, *French Liberal Thought in the Eighteenth Century* (1929), p. 195. •

principle that everyone has an equal right to happiness. Neither Voltaire nor Rousseau ever took the final step which would have landed them in democracy; in some of the other *philosophes*, however, one can observe a rather different outcropping of the eighteenth-century preoccupation with social happiness and misery which from another direction was to lead towards democracy.

Helvétius, as Bentham acknowledged, was the parent of utilitarianism and therefore of that species of democracy which accompanied philosophic radicalism and nineteenth-century liberalism. The miseries of ordinary men, which had touched the sentiment or emotions of Voltaire and Rousseau, turning the one into a satirist and the other into a pessimistic humanitarian, touched the intellect of Helvétius and turned him into a political psychologist and philosopher. In *De l'esprit* he stated explicitly the doctrine of utilitarianism that the greatest happiness of the greatest number should be the sole criterion for the organization and government of society. The doctrine has itself a very close connection with the idea that everyone has an equal right, socially and politically, to happiness. The notion of political "rights" was anathema to many of the later utilitarians, and the false psychological theory of pain and pleasure upon which they and Helvétius before them based the structure of their social principles has nothing to do with the characteristic eighteenth-century idea of the "rights" of man. Nevertheless, the "greatest happiness of the greatest number" was as revolutionary an idea in the eighteenth century, because inconsistent with the facts of society and politics, as that of equal rights of all to happiness. And the two ideas, though they may be inconsistent themselves on one plane,

lead into each other; they are like parallel straight lines which may never meet if prolonged in one kind of space, but which will if prolonged in another. Their inconsistency is apparent in the plane of abstract thinking, in the books and systems of political philosophers, but they begin to approach one another in the minds of ordinary men where such political beliefs and ideas are the causes of or excuses for political actions. Before the nineteenth century, in the ordering of society and the carrying on of the king's government the happiness or unhappiness of the great majority of people was scarcely considered at all, and if anyone, before the French Revolution, maintained that the happiness of the common people ought to be considered equally with that of landowners, nobles, or kings, he was regarded by the governing and property-owning classes and a good many other people as a seditious criminal. He affected them with the kind of vindictive horror which is now felt by the governing and property owning classes when they contemplate a communist. In a very real sense, therefore, people did believe that certain classes had a legal and moral "right" to happiness and certain other classes had no such right: and in a very real sense this belief and the iron framework of law and the granite structure of society, built up about the belief, ensured in practice these unequal rights to happiness to different persons. But if people believe that a small class have a right to happiness and that the rest of the population have not this right, and if this belief acts through the workings of government, the distribution of political power, and the institutions and organization of society so that in fact the happiness of the small privileged class is alone allowed to count politically, two

POLITICAL COMMUNAL PSYCHOLOGY

things follow: people also believe that the greatest happiness of the greatest number should not be the sole criterion for the organization and government of society, and the principle of utilitarianism is in conflict with the actual structure of society and the working of the political system.

The outcropping of this principle of utilitarianism in Helvétius is only a particular instance of the pre-occupation of men in the middle of the eighteenth century with the problem of the distribution of happiness. It was thus, as we have seen, closely connected with the communal psychology from which sprang the fundamental tenet of democracy about the right to happiness. As developed by the English utilitarians and philosophic radicals, it eventually ousted the idea of equal rights to happiness, and in communal psychology democracy came to be identified with a political system in which the criterion of government was the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Democracy, humanitarianism, and utilitarianism, whatever their subsequent history, all sprang from the same root in the communal psychology of the eighteenth century, the revolt against the wretchedness and miseries in human society and against the unequal distribution of happiness. The revolutionary nature of that root is shown by another blossom and fruit which also sprang directly from it. If one can for a moment forget all the dogma and technical economic and historical argument in that strange book, Marx's *Das Kapital*, and in the shifting creed of socialism and communism, and if one thinks only of the "general idea", the broad and vital argument, underlying the creed, the Word—to borrow a term from religion—which is what in socialism has certainly made its appeal to and become a part of the communal psychology of millions of ordinary

men, one will see that it is again this idea of happiness and of the distribution of happiness working in communal psychology. Marx says, and all socialists and communists say: "Look at this nineteenth-century world of Europe. On one side are the capitalists and on the other the workers; on one side the exploiters, on the other the exploited; on one side those who take all material things which make for happiness, on the other those who are left with low wages and long hours of manual labour, with poverty and all the material conditions which make for misery. The causes of social unhappiness and of the unequal distribution of happiness are not political; there is only one cause, an economic one, and only by reorganizing the economic structure of society in accordance with the principles of socialism is it possible to obtain an equal distribution of happiness." The simple happiness of the poor and the blessings of a life unburdened by the cares of property have always been a fruitful theme for moralists, poets, aristocrats, the bourgeoisie, and educated capitalists, but it was inevitable that, as soon as even a vague idea began to get about in the world that no kind of happiness or unhappiness should be the monopoly or privilege of any particular class, some people should raise the question whether the distribution of wealth has not some connection with the distribution of happiness. Starting from an axiom about the distribution of happiness in society, the early democrat drew a line in the political plane which ended in a point which we now call political democracy; the socialist started from the same axiom and drew a line in the economic plane to a point which we now call socialism or communism. The communist of to-day is scornfully confident that the two points in which the political and economic exploiters have ended

their journeys are poles asunder and mutually inconsistent and contradictory. He may be right, but it is none the less important to note that they started their journeys from the same point and that the lines which they traced on the map of history continually met and crossed each other. Rousseau was already a socialist in the *Discours sur l'origine de l'Inégalité*, before the revolution Morelly and Mably were preaching communism as the only road to social happiness; Babeuf by a revolution within a revolution attempted to put the principle into practice. Socialism or equality on the economic plane and democracy or equality on the political plane might seem to some alternative methods of obtaining an equal distribution of happiness. But there were very early people who saw that socialism might well be not so much an alternative to democracy as the inevitable result of it. This connection of the two lines of thought in communal psychology can be seen very clearly in the following words of William Windham in May 1792:

It will be well worth while of people not indifferent to their own interests, whatever experiments they may wish to make with those of other people, to consider, whether this practice of teaching all the world to submit to nothing but what their reason can satisfy them of the truth of, may not proceed in time to lengths which they will not much like; and whether they do not conceive, that upon this doctrine of universal right arguments might not be brought, such at least as an audience of labouring men may think satisfactory, why there should not be an equality of property as well as an equality of voting. Hints of this sort have already been thrown out, I think, in Mr. Payne's pamphlet. I am sure it would not be difficult to improve them in a way to make them circulate among the lower people, as rapidly as arguments about the principles of government are said now to do among the workmen of Sheffield. . . . Suppose someone should take it into their head to write a work addressed to the labouring people

exposing to them the iniquity of that system which condemns half the world to labour for the other, and pleading for such a partition of goods as may give to everyone a competence and leave to none a superfluity. I am certainly not meaning to say that such arguments would be good ones; I am not meaning to say, that they might not be easily answered, but I should be sorry to undertake to answer them in an auditory such as composes the majority of every parish in England.¹

History has shown that the Rt. Hon. William Windham had a prophetic sense far sounder than his grammar or his English. He saw how dangerous it is for any large number of people to begin to think. One shares his doubts in his own ability to meet those arguments which half a century later were to become the commonplaces of socialism. His political instinct, however, told him rightly that, once people get it into their heads that there should be an equal distribution of happiness in human society, they will argue that its establishment requires an equal distribution of property as well as an equal distribution of political power. Five years before Madison in America had foreseen the same development and did his best to make the constitution of the United States undemocratic because he thought that democracy would inevitably lead to an attempt to equalize the distribution of property. In the Philadelphia Convention in 1787 he opposed direct election of the Senate and gave the following as his reasons:

In all civilized countries the people fall into different classes, having a real or supposed difference of interests. . . . There will be, particularly, the distinction of rich and poor. . . . An increase of population will of necessity increase the proportion of those who will labour under the hardships of life, and secretly sigh for a more equal dis-

¹ Rosebery, *Windham Papers*, vol. ii. p. 102 quoted by Penman, *Irresistible Movement of Democracy*, p. 549.

POLITICAL COMMUNAL PSYCHOLOGY

tribution of its blessings. These may in time outnumber those who are placed above the feelings of indigence. According to the laws of equal suffrage, the power will slide into the hands of the former. . . . How is this danger to be guarded against, on republican principles; how is the danger, in all cases of interested coalitions, to oppress the minority, to be guarded against? Among other means, by the establishment of a body, in the government, sufficiently respectable for its wisdom and virtue to aid, on such emergencies, the preponderance of justice, by throwing its weight into that scale.¹

This speech of Madison is extremely interesting as showing the ultimate differences between the democratic and undemocratic psychology and the historical connections between democracy and socialism. The democrats had demanded democracy as a means of obtaining a society in which there would be an equal distribution of the blessings of life. Madison argues that an equal distribution of the blessings of life will mean an equal distribution of property and that, if democracy gives political power to the majority (who are naturally "those who labour under the hardships of life"), political power will be used by the majority to equalize the distribution of property. Madison, whose psychology is essentially undemocratic, instinctively opposes from every side. He does not want a society in which the blessings of life are equally distributed or at any rate he does not believe in it as a practical possibility; he proposes deliberately to preserve the structure of society which requires a division into the classes of rich and poor, of "those who are above the feelings of indigence" and of "those who labour under the hardships of life". His argument assumes that the equalizing of happiness would entail the equalizing of property, and

¹ Quoted by Penman, *Irresistible Movement of Democracy*, p. 44.

DEMOCRACY

that this again would entail the taking of property from the rich in order to give it to the poor. This would be the oppression of a minority by a majority. Like all anti-democrats, that is all those who do not accept the fundamental axiom of democracy that everyone has an equal right to happiness, Madison assumes that the subjection of a minority of property owners to a majority of the propertyless is unjust, but that the subjection of a majority of the propertyless to a minority of property owners is just, and he identifies the property owners with respectability, wisdom, virtue, and justice. Why an interested coalition of the majority should be more dangerous (except to the minority) and more unjust than an interested coalition of the minority, he does not explain. Looking back over the course of history, one sees that for century after century, in all ages and places, a majority composed of unprivileged and unpropertied men have been subjected, by social institutions and the distribution of political power, to a minority composed of the privileged and the property owners. It is difficult to see any evidence that this minority ever showed any peculiar wisdom, virtue, or justice, or that it did not invariably use its power as best it could to oppress the majority. Yet every opponent, first of democracy in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and later of socialism in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, has always made the same assumptions as underlie the argument of Madison.

If one looks forward nearly a hundred years from the day when Madison was making his speech in the Philadelphia Convention, one may observe these lines of democracy and socialism still crossing one another, and the assumptions and arguments of Madison reappearing in very strange forms in the

mind of an English aristocrat, who was to become leader of the Conservative Party and Prime Minister of England. Between 1860 and 1865 Lord Robert Cecil, afterwards Marquis of Salisbury, was doing his best to convince the governing classes in Great Britain of the truth which Madison had already preached to the Philadelphia Convention in 1787, that "democracy would in fact involve danger to private property",¹ and he knew that if only he could persuade the governing classes of this fact, "nothing further was needed. The number of members in that House of Commons who would have advocated it (democracy) on such a hypothesis was a negligible quantity." But Lord Robert's arguments soared away into regions unknown to the American. The only natural right of any importance from a political point of view, according to Lord Robert Cecil, is the right of property, and in a civilized State rights of property must necessarily occupy the largest part of the time and energies of government, and therefore of parliament. "A democratic extension of the franchise would not only give a share to every man in the government of the country, but would give to every man an equal share. Yet with regard to the chief subject of parliamentary action (property), there is and always will be a ubiquitous inequality of interest in the decisions taken." This is obviously absurd. "The best test of natural right is that right which mankind, left to themselves to regulate their own concerns, must naturally admit." The most "natural" and the highest type of organization for regulating in the middle of the nineteenth century the state, country, Empire of Britain—that amazing complex of material and immaterial in-

¹ Lady Gwendolen Cecil, *Life of Robert Marquis of Salisbury*, vol. i. p. 148. For what follows, see also pp. 150-153 and 181.

terests and of legal and moral obligations, the object of spiritual allegiances and of passionate religious, racial, and poetical emotions—was found by Lord Robert Cecil in the joint-stock company:

"The best test of natural right is that right which mankind, left to themselves to regulate their own concerns, must naturally admit." Joint-Stock Companies, like States, finding themselves too numerous to undertake directly the management of their affairs, have adopted a representative system. How do they settle this thorny question of the suffrage? The system under which by mutual agreement such bodies are universally managed is that the voting power is strictly proportioned to the stake which each man holds in the Company. "It is a system whose justice has never been disputed. . . . The wildest dreamer never suggested that all the shareholders should each have a single vote, without reference to the number of shares they might hold."

What hinders the parallel from being applied to States? "The bestowal upon any class of a voting power disproportionate to their stake in the country must infallibly give to that class a power *pro tanto* of using taxation as an instrument of plunder, and expenditure and legislation as a fountain of gain.* If universal suffrage were to invest one class with despotic power it would be subjected to the temptation to which all despots are liable and must be expected on occasions to succumb to them.¹

The political psychology in this passage is extraordinarily illuminating. It is the political, the whole social, psychology of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, trying to find up-to-date nineteenth-century arguments by which to sustain itself. Observe the dominating position which property occupies in the mind of Lord Robert Cecil. For him property alone is entitled to consideration as the material for

¹ Quotations and argument of an article by Lord Robert Cecil in the *Quarterly Review*, July 1864, in Lady Gwendolen Cecil, *Life of Robert Marquis of Salisbury*, vol. i. pp. 150-153.

political and social structure. Before the birth of modern democracy, that was universally accepted as true by communal psychology. States were the property of kings, political power was the property of privileged classes. The man without property had "no stake in the country" and therefore, in effect, no political status. His sole political function was to obey the laws made for him, and pay the taxes imposed upon him, by the owners of property and by those who possessed the privilege of law-making. The actual bonds which held the State and society together were thus those of property and privilege, which, therefore, in communal psychology, were naturally regarded as the only things determining political relationships, political rights and duties. This accounts for many historical facts which to-day are difficult even to understand, for instance, that at the end of the eighteenth century a man like Burke could still argue that liberty was only "an entailed inheritance", or that it seemed perfectly reasonable to highly intelligent and apparently civilized men that allegiance and nationality, the whole political destiny of vast areas of territory and great populations, should be determined by the marriage of some half-imbecile prince to some half-imbecile princess.

It was natural that Lord Robert Cecil, three-quarters of a century after the French Revolution, five years after the publication of the *Origin of Species*, sixteen years after the publication of *The Communist Manifesto*, in combating what he called the democratic theory, should exhibit the same attitude of mind, though he clothed it not in the language, arguments, and images of a James I., Louis XIV., or Edmund Burke, but in those of a journalist and stockbroker of 1864. For the democratic psychology and theory cut right across this communal psycho-

logy of property and privilege. It cut across it from two directions. One we have already examined. If everyone has an equal right to happiness and the function of government is to maintain this right and to procure the greatest happiness of the greatest number, privilege and property will soon politically occupy a subordinate place. Or to put the matter rather differently and in language natural to the nineteenth century, if the State is not to be an association of equals the object of which is the maximum happiness of the maximum number, it must be a joint-stock company of privilege holders and property owners, the object of which is the maintenance and improvement of their property. But there is another direction from which democratic psychology cuts across the psychology of privilege and property, and Lord Robert instinctively opposed its invasion by accepting the joint-stock company as that vision of the perfect State which Plato thought might perhaps be laid up as a pattern in Heaven for anyone who wishes to see it.

The idea of government based on a Social Contract is a very ancient one and was born long before modern democracy. To-day it is so unfashionable that any text-book of political science will treat it as exploded or discarded in the nineteenth century together with the complementary idea of natural rights. I do not propose to retravel this beaten track, the curious history of its phases from Hobbes to Rousseau, the fairy tales and pastorals which the eighteenth century mistook for a science of sociology. Nevertheless, the idea of a social contract as the basis for human government, in a generalized form, has passed into communal psychology and has had considerable influence upon the history of democracy. Most people to-day have a vague idea that society ought to be

governed politically on a basis of agreement. If they were given to conscious speculation on such matters and were articulate, they would say, I think that in a country, nation, or state the political structure must be founded upon a common purpose of all the individuals who are citizens. Further, the majority would agree that the common purpose of the community is concerned in some way or other with the community's happiness, that politically the government of a state should be so organized as to give effect to this communal purpose of protecting and promoting the happiness of all members of the community. This aspect of contemporary communal psychology, which I have ventured to make articulate, is completely different from that of pre-democratic communal psychology, which was articulate in Lord Robert Cecil in 1864. The only political nexus between individuals which has to be considered in the pre-democratic State—and which, Lord Robert says, ought to be considered—is the nexus of property or privilege, inheritable or purchasable. On the contrary, says the democrat, the only nexus which ought to be considered is that of a common purpose, the social agreement to pursue the happiness of the whole community.

Lord Robert Cecil was, therefore, right from his own point of view to translate the ideals and communal psychology of the ancient regime into the terms of the already industrialized world of 1864 and to take the organization of a joint-stock company as a perfect model for the political organization of Victorian England. If the political relations between individuals which are to be considered are only those of property and vested interest, which is another name for what our ancestors called privilege, never those of social purpose, the constitution maker and

legislator could hardly do better than go for his model to the company promoter and the stockbroker. And how deeply the communal psychology which a man accepts moulds his mind and directs his political judgment and his social ideas is shown by one curious little ripple in Lord Robert's argument, the significance of which might well escape the reader's notice. Speaking of the organization of the joint-stock company, he says: "It is a system whose justice has never been disputed. . . . The wildest dreamer never suggested that all the shareholders should each have a single vote, without reference to the number of shares they might hold." The English aristocrat of 1864 did not know his own England; he knew only the England of property, privilege, and vested interest. If he had known it, he would have known that, already twenty years before he wrote those words, the justice of the system had been disputed, not indeed by wild dreamers, but by extremely practical men who proceeded to form joint-stock companies in which all the shareholders each had a single vote, without reference to the number of shares they might hold. The first consumers' co-operative society was formed in 1844 at Rochdale, and by the year 1864 there were about 400 in Great Britain; indeed, it was in the very year in which Lord Robert was writing that there was founded the Co-operative Wholesale Society, a federation of the consumers' societies and now one of the largest commercial and manufacturing undertakings in the United Kingdom. In 1928 the share capital of the 1245 societies of the Co-operative Movement amounted to £100,000,000 and their annual trade to £209,000,000. From the first it has been a rule that every shareholder has a single vote, without reference to the number of shares or amount of capital he may hold. And it is significant that those

who invented the co-operative system of industry and have built up the immense trade and industry now carried on by the Movement were working men. Half consciously and half instinctively their object was to establish a democratic system of industry.¹ That is why, though they were practical men and not dreamers or theorists, they disputed the justice of the joint-stock company system, refused to give the control of their undertakings to the property owners, and adopted the system of "one man, one vote". The reason of this was that in the communal psychology which they had accepted lay the idea or feeling, dim and vague perhaps but yet active, that even in a commercial undertaking or joint-stock company a man with one share might have just as big "a stake in the company" as a man with a hundred shares, because the important thing was not the property, privilege, or vested interest of the individual shareholder, but the common purpose, the common benefit, in relation to which every individual counted equally as one.

Lastly, we may observe the curious history of the connection between religious beliefs, and the democratic attitude towards communal happiness. The idea that earthly happiness is of any great importance is inconsistent with the central doctrine of the Christian religion as preached by the various Christian Churches. The Churches themselves have always disagreed so bitterly upon what is the true Faith, that it may seem a bold thing to try to define it for them; but it is roughly correct to say that a belief in the incarnation of Jesus Christ and a certain attitude towards sin are fundamental Christian doctrines. The Christian believes that nothing happen-

¹ For a fuller discussion of this question I must refer the reader to my book, *Co-operation and the Future of Industry*, pp. 37 and following.

ing to him in this life can matter very much to him compared with his post-mortem happiness and salvation. Salvation can be assured only if a man has a certain attitude towards his sins (though the various Churches disagree as to what that attitude must be) and if he believes that Jesus was the Son of God and by His death made salvation possible. It would be absurd to pretend that these beliefs cannot be held by those who believe in the fundamental tenet of democracy with regard to communal happiness, for many Christians have been democrats and many democrats have been Christians. But it is nevertheless true that the democratic doctrine with regard to happiness is in practice inconsistent with the doctrines of Christian Churches. Thousands of people, as always happens in such cases, have tried to accept and reconcile both sets of beliefs, but beneath the surface of European history during the last 150 years the struggle between the communal psychology of democracy and the communal psychology of Christianity has been working itself out. One notable result of the conflict has been a gradual pushing back of religious beliefs into a secluded corner of the ordinary man's mind, disconnected with politics or the affairs of this world and reserved for rare contemplation of his private conduct, metaphysical speculation, and meditation on death. Before the nineteenth century Christianity had a direct and constant effect upon politics and political beliefs, for, if one imagines religious beliefs as one circle and communal political psychology as another, then looking back at even the most sceptical period of the eighteenth century one sees the two circles intersecting. To-day in the minds of nearly everyone, even if he have a circle of religious belief, it rarely has any point of intersection with his political psychology.

POLITICAL COMMUNAL PSYCHOLOGY

The intersection of the two circles can be seen very clearly in the mind of Hannah More contemplating the starving women of Shipham. Her politics are so much a part of her religion that it is almost impossible to say where the one begins and the other ends. Her attitude towards starvation and luxuries, towards unhappiness and happiness, towards God and sin, is a mixture of politics and religion; it is partly undemocratic and partly Christian, and the two parts fit perfectly into one another. It is because practically no one to-day has Hannah More's religious beliefs that practically no one has her political beliefs, or perhaps one might even say that so many people have abandoned her religious beliefs, the beliefs underlying Christianity, because so many have accepted the political beliefs underlying democracy.

Democracy is essentially irreligious and anti-Christian because of its fundamental tenet with regard to the importance of, and equal right to, human happiness. It was no chance that the passionate humanitarian Voltaire was also a passionate opponent of the Christianity of the Church of Rome, for a man who believes, as Voltaire did, that the primary object of a civilized and rational being should be to make the world we live in as comfortable and civilized as possible for everyone, be he heathen or Christian, saint or sinner, is revolted by the doctrine and practice of a church which not only preaches that earthly happiness is unimportant, but is prepared to make many people suffer Hell in this life in order to give them the chance of escaping it in the next.

As soon as people began to believe that happiness was politically of supreme importance, that everyone had an equal right to happiness, or that government should aim at the greatest happiness of the greatest

number, the conflict between political psychology and religious psychology began in their minds. Christianity envisages a framework for human society in which earthly miseries have a recognized, permanent, and honourable place. They are trials sent by Heaven to test and train us; as such, it is impious to repine against them. Famines and the like are tribulations with which, as Miss Hannah More said, it has pleased God in the past to afflict the land and will please Him again in the future. Under such circumstances there is a natural tendency for the mind to accept famines, poverty, and similar political evils as inevitable blessings in disguise and to conclude that efforts to make them impossible are futile and presumptuous. Besides, there are always such texts to fall back upon as

Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you,

Take therefore no heed for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

or

And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed.

or

It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

The words of these texts are so familiar to us that their meaning is blurred. But they do mean or did mean something, and if one reads them with sufficient attention to grasp again what they meant in the time of Christ, of Luther, and of the Bull Unigenitus, one sees how barbarous that meaning must have seemed to the humanitarianism of Voltaire, the utilitarianism of Bentham, or to the democrat who believes that civilization is incompatible with poverty and unhappiness. I have pointed out above how strangely tolerant of the miseries inflicted on human beings by their political and religious institutions were the most humane and civilized men before the eighteenth century, and that, however critical they might be of particular evils, they never spoke with the note of passionate revulsion which we hear so often in men's voices since Swift, Voltaire, and Rousseau. The reason for this is that the background and depths of the minds of men as sceptical as Erasmus and Montaigne were formed by the psychology of Christianity. Montaigne, indeed, came nearer than any other thinker of old times to thinking and feeling as we do. His nature and his reason made him a humanitarian two centuries too early, and one can watch already in his mind the conflict between his humanitarianism and Christianity, for from that conflict springs his profoundest scepticism. And yet in the profoundest depths of Montaigne's psychology there still remains the Christian attitude towards earthly happiness and unhappiness, an attitude of acceptance and resignation.

There is another way in which Christian psycho-

logy is in conflict with the psychology out of which grew humanitarianism, utilitarianism, and democracy. The Christian not only has to believe that earthly happiness is of no importance and to try to act as if it were of no importance (historically he has usually succeeded where it was his neighbour's happiness that was in question); he also has to believe in sin. If you look back over the history of the last 800 or 900 years in Europe and think of the political and religious psychology which has dominated men's minds from century to century, recall the beliefs which they held about government and justice, about rulers and subjects, about peace and war, about property and poverty, about crime and punishment, if you remember the political acts which they did, the society which they built, the laws which they made, and the wars which they fought, giving these beliefs as their reasons or excuses, then you will observe what an active part the Christian doctrine of sin has played in political communal psychology. Christianity teaches that all men are sinners, but not in an equal degree. What acts or thoughts are, and what are not, sins has been determined by God. The various sects of Christians believe that God has revealed to man His all-important decisions with regard to sin in various ways. Some hold that He has implanted in the mind of each man a sense of what is right or wrong, so that everyone is his own judge of sin, but the vast majority have believed that God delegates His divine powers or knowledge to certain institutions or authorities, *e.g.* Churches, so that they may interpret His not always simple edicts with regard to sin and determine in particular cases the appropriate penances and punishments.

The more one studies communal psychology, the history of ideas, and the ways in which beliefs and

POLITICAL COMMUNAL PSYCHOLOGY

ideas have affected or have not affected social and political actions, the more one is forced to recognize a psychological process which has had a vast effect upon human history, but which is rarely given its proper place by historians, who are usually more interested in events, theories, and "movements" than in communal psychology. In one sense those are correct who maintain that social and political events are hardly ever determined by beliefs or rational intellectual processes. As a rule a communal event, which we call history, happens either when a few people in whose hands is power or a very large number of people want something or want to go in some particular direction, or again when two large bodies of people want to go in opposite directions. Historical events are, therefore, the effect of desires, not the last link in an intellectual or rational chain, of which the first link is a belief. Thus, Augustus Caesar did not become emperor because anyone had come to believe that an imperial constitution was better for the people of Rome than a republican; Charles II. did not enter London on May 29, 1660, because anyone believed in the divine right of kings; nor did Louis XVI. lose his head because anyone believed in democracy. All this is true, and yet there is an aspect of history in which ideas and beliefs play a determining part. If one examines the communal psychology of any considerable period of time, one finds in the mind of nearly everyone then living a background or network of what may be called fundamental ideas. These ideas may not often be consciously stated; they are often so wide or vague as to be in the nature of an intellectual attitude rather than of definite beliefs; but they are assumed as postulates by writers and thinkers, and in religious, political, or social controversies they are explicitly stated as con-

clusive reasons for acting in one way rather than in another.

These ideas are fundamental because they have the power of adhering to or affecting other systems of ideas than that in which they originally made their appearance and also of taking all kinds of different forms in contemporary thought. That is why I said above that they often form an intellectual background or network to men's minds. The attitude towards happiness which developed in the eighteenth century and which I have examined above is a characteristic example of such a network or ganglion of ideas. The Christian belief in sin is another: it began in a religious and metaphysical doctrine, but its spell was so potent, its implications so widely subtle, that it gradually penetrated the whole field of European life and thought, forming a vast ganglion of interrelated ideas and beliefs which affected or infected not only men's religions, but the whole of their social and political life. It was, of course, an important part of that spiritual matrix in which the minds of Europeans received a common form. It was not often a system of ideas consciously used by the individual or community as a rational motive for action. But it lay in the background of all men's minds, entangled in all their thoughts, impregnating all their beliefs; it coloured their whole outlook on the world; in religion and in the social and political ordering of their lives it kept their eyes and minds always turned in a certain direction so that they could scarcely see anything sane or humane which fell outside this foggy circle of sin and punishment and hell. Finally, it always lay in the background and in the depths of their minds, a vast reservoir from which every man might at any moment fish up some fairy tale with which to rationalize his passions or excuse his desires.

As long as the Christian religious doctrine of sin retained its hold on men's minds it profoundly influenced their political ideas and their attitude towards government. Since all men are sinners and, from the days of Moses and the Ten Commandments, sins have been tabulated and defined by Divine Laws and in many cases the appropriate penalties and punishments appended by the Almighty and His prophets, it was a natural step to regard political laws in the same light as these Divine Laws, the king or rulers as occupying on earth the same position as the Almighty in Heaven, and the citizen or subject as politically little more than a potential sinner to be restrained from actually sinning by the fear of punishment. From the Middle Ages until the middle of the eighteenth century political thought and political history are dominated by such conceptions, and unless one understands and allows for them much of the communal psychology of that long stretch of time is inexplicable to us. They account, for instance, for the rigidity and persistence of the authoritarian view of politics. Knowledge of what is a sin is reserved to authority, in the religious sphere to God, His prophets and His churches, in the political to the king and his ministers and judges. To oppose and defy God or the Church is the most heinous of religious sins; to oppose and defy the Government is by analogy the most heinous of political sins. All political and legal crimes are sins or have the emotional colour of sins and are rightly punished as such. They are not merely breaches of governmental regulations or the legitimate acts of opposition by free men to what they consider unwise or illegitimate use of power; they are the hateful acts of politically wicked men, and as such are rightly punished and execrated as sins. This attitude of mind explains the fact which

puzzles so many people when they read the history of Europe before 1800, the amazing savagery of the penal codes accepted as right and proper by otherwise humane men. These humane men regarded the law-breaker, not simply as one who had transgressed a governmental regulation forbidding people to snare a rabbit or steal a sheep, but also as, in the religious sense, a sinner. The attitude towards sin and sinners which Christianity had inculcated in men's minds was then transferred to crime and criminals. It was right to make sinners unhappy for their own good; and for the worst forms of sin, such as heresy, burning at the stake and every kind of physical torture were considered appropriate forms of punishment. Naturally if you considered that it was only right for a good Christian to rack and burn alive those who committed the sin of believing or disbelieving in Transubstantiation (as the case might be), you also considered it your duty to treat in a similar way those who committed such crimes and sins as *lèse-majesté*, murder, or petty theft.

Our political psychology even to-day has by no means freed itself from this influence of the Christian doctrine of sin, and that is why many people will probably feel an immediate desire to deny the statements in the preceding paragraphs or condemn them as exaggerated. It is necessary therefore to recall a few of the facts upon which they are based. In the first place, the whole of Greek (or rather Athenian) literature and history shows us the political psychology of a people who are free from this Christian sense of sin. The Greek knew what sin in the religious sense meant, but he was quite unaware that all men are born sinners, and that the most important occupation for them in this life is to save themselves from punishment for their sins in the

next. Contravention of divine law was regarded as due to blind folly, presumption, fate, or ignorance rather than to anything resembling what we call wickedness, and the appropriate punishment descends upon the Greek "sinner" from heaven with the cold relentlessness of a law of nature, not out of the hot vindictiveness of a personal God. The great sinners, like Prometheus or Oedipus, are therefore fit objects for our fear and pity and even admiration, never for our detestation. This attitude of the Athenian towards the ethical constitution of the universe had a tremendous effect upon his religious, social, and political psychology. Everyone knows the feeling of exhilaration, the sudden sense of a hit erto unimagined "pure serene", when he comes in contact with almost any product of the Greek and particularly the Athenian mind. Put on the one side Dante, *King Lear*, *Paradise Lost*, *Le Misanthrope*, *Faust*, *Madame Bovary*, *War and Peace*, *The Possessed*; on the other the *Odyssey*, the two Oedipus tragedies of Sophocles, Thucydides, Aristophanes's *Lysistrata*, the *Apology* and *Phaedrus* of Plato: or recall the curious sensation which came to you when, the day after you had stood in the Christian cathedral of Santa Maria la Nuova at Monreale, you suddenly walked round a fold of the bare Sicilian hill and saw in front of you the Greek temple at Segesta. The artistic products of the post-Christian mind may have every quality which the highest genius can give them, but to pass from them to the Greek is like leaving the most splendid room in the most magnificent palace, in which the windows are always kept closed and a dead rat is permanently decomposing under the floor and obscene blue-bottle flies are for ever buzzing about the ceiling and the heavy damask curtains, to find oneself in the open air of a spring day. The

difference is between the mind obsessed and the mind untroubled by a sense of sin. And the Greek carried this freedom and freshness of mind over from his religion into his politics and social organization as well as into his literature and architecture. The idea of political or social "wickedness" is almost entirely absent from Greek history or Greek political philosophy. Party politics could be as bitter in Athens as in any other State at any period of the world's history, but, however much one side or one politician may abuse the other, the abuse almost always lacks that note of moral indignation which accompanies the consciousness that those who disagree with you must be not only wrong, but wicked. For Aristophanes Kleon represented everything that was wrong politically, and Demosthenes calls Aeschines a scoundrel in the most splendid language which has ever been used to make a work of art out of political abuse, but neither of them had that feeling for his opponent which we can see in the attitude of a Gladstone to a Disraeli. To Gladstone Disraeli was not only politically wrong and on the wrong side, he was a wicked man opposing God and His righteous servant, the leader of the Liberal Party.

The effect of the absence of a sense of sin in politics among the Greeks can be seen in other ways. It affected their whole attitude towards law and crime and punishment. The Athenian never conceived the State or rulers on the analogy of God issuing commandments and determining the rewards for righteous conduct and the punishment for sins. The determination of crimes and the infliction of punishment were not therefore, as they are with us, among the most important functions of the State; politically the citizen was not regarded primarily as a potential political sinner; and the law-breaker was not

assumed to be necessarily wicked. Hence there was a leniency and humanity in the administration of the criminal law which is almost unintelligible to Christianized Europeans even to-day. Legal torture, tolerated for centuries in Christian law-courts, was abhorrent to the Athenian; the traitor, convicted of treason, whom every civilized Christian State to-day shoots or hangs, was banished or, if condemned to death, allowed to escape. The ruling principle of the Athenian laws was not coercion through punishment, but "Isonomia"—fair play—"the very name of which", says Herodotus, "is beautiful". It was this conception of even the criminal law as rational and equitable, and therefore beautiful, regulations of a common life of free citizens, not commands of Authority designed to restrain and terrify subjects inveterately inclined to crime and sin, which explains "why it was no pedantic scruple but the habit and devotion of a lifetime which made Socrates indignantly reject his friends' suggestion that he should escape from prison."¹

¹ A. E. Zimmern, *The Greek Commonwealth*, fourth edition, p. 130. The following expert opinion of the trial of Socrates by a distinguished British lawyer, the late Sir John Macdonell, K. C. B., sometime King's Remembrancer and Senior Master of the Supreme Court of Judicature, in his *Historical Trials*, p. 16, is worth quoting in full:

"If the prosecution and condemnation of Socrates were acts of State, they were at least done decently and in order, and with no desire to stifle the voice of the victim, and there are none of the circumstances of brutality which I shall often have to note in medieval and modern trials. That is one view of the trial still often expressed. But there will always be others who, prizing individual freedom, and the inner life above all things, thinking much of the invisible and unponderable things about us, will regard the result as a crime, the victim as the first and greatest martyr for true freedom and true progress. In the presence of these antinomies among the unconcarnable things of life, the mere lawyer cannot give much assistance. But he will try to put himself in the position of the judges and seek to understand the law which they administered, he will apply to their conduct the tests, not of our time, but of their own. And he will also put to himself the question: would the result have differed if Socrates had

DEMOCRACY

It is by comparing this political communal psychology of the Greeks with that of Christian Europe that one sees how the idea of sin has inextricably interwoven itself into the Christian attitude towards the State, government, and law. By the seventeenth century the process had gone to lengths which even the human mind, with its almost unlimited capacity for delusion, could hardly exceed, and which, in fact, it has only exceeded by the help of the still more fantastic delusions about the modern sovereign state concealed under the virtue called to-day patriotism. By the seventeenth century the king or government had fully established itself on earth and in the sphere of politics in a position analogous to that of God in Heaven and the sphere of religion. A law was a command issued either by a divine ruler, in which case it

been tried elsewhere and at some other time? It will appear, I think, when I come to treat of subsequent trials, that he might have fared no better, perhaps worse. Brought before an ecclesiastical Court, as were Bruno and Campanella, he would have been tortured; he would have been subjected to repeated examinations and long confinement intended to break him down in body; his prosecutors laying hold of his belief in a demonic voice, he would have been charged with sorcery or magic; he would have been cut off from his disciples and delivered over, shattered and crushed in body, to the civil power to be burned. Had he been tried in this country at any time before the middle of last century, would his treatment have been much better? In Tudor or Stuart reigns he would have been charged for high treason or blasphemy or misdemeanour of some kind, browbeaten by the law officers prosecuting, scolded by the presiding judge as a pestilent nuisance to the State, and his last words before a cruel death might have been cut short or drowned in the roll of drums beneath the scaffold. Let us picture his coming before an English or Scotch judge at the end of the eighteenth century - before an Ellenborough who tried Howe or a Braxfield who tried Muir and Palmer; he would have been belaboured with pompous platitudes or subjected to coarse ribaldry, and his conviction would have been certain. An Austrian writer in 1855 says that if he had been in Vienna or Berlin or Munich, and had been constantly assailing the incompetency of rulers and the faults of the existing dynasties: "it would not have been after ten years, but in the first year of his teaching that he would have been put *extra statum noendi*; and even if he had not been condemned to death, he would have been imprisoned for life."

was religious, or by an earthly ruler, in which case it was civil or criminal. The notion of law as a system of social regulations set up by the citizens themselves and aiming at "fair play", to which, therefore, each felt that he could give the allegiance of a free and rational man, did not exist. The law was a command from above ; it determined for the citizen what was right and what wrong socially and politically, just as God's commands, recorded in the Bible, determined for the Christian what was right and what wrong religiously and ethically. The citizen who broke the law of the land and the Christian who broke the law of God were alike sinners, on whose heads, for their own good, inevitably descended the most terrible punishments. All men are by nature sinners, and just as God, through His Church and Ministers, in His infinite goodness, seeks to prevent them sinning by the fear of Hell and eternal punishment, by the rack and the stake, and by ordinances regulating religious penance, so the earthly ruler attempts to restrain the inveterate human tendency to sin by pains and penalties, the fear of death, imprisonment, or fine.

If one wishes to see how completely this psychology had established itself in Europe by the seventeenth century, one should read Hobbes's *Leviathan*. No man has ever had a more profoundly sceptical mind than Hobbes. As a destructive thinker he is devastating; God, the Bible, religion, the Pope and Catholic Church, the bases of authority and government as understood in his age, the whole vast fabric of religious, social, and political delusion and illusion seem to crumble and fall before the cool assault of his argument, the flash of his epigrams, the play of his wit and humour. If he had been a Frenchman or, indeed, of any nationality other than English, it

would have been easy to gauge the real depth of his scepticism and atheism, but, since he was English, it is impossible to tell how far he himself ever faced the truth and the consequences of his own destructive reasoning. His attitude towards government and the disastrous politics of his time is clearly that of the entirely sensible man who says, when everyone around him is making life hell and the world a desert in the name of God or some delusion masquerading under the name of eternal truth: "For God's sake, let us have peace and quiet at any price". One cannot, therefore, be sure whether it is with the cynicism of the supremely practical and divinely sensible man that he gives the inevitable little twist to his destructive argument which always sets up again the God whom he has just knocked down, the Church whose authority he has just undermined, and the divine right of kings which he has just shown to be a delusion. On the other hand, it seems more probable that Hobbes, following the English tradition, had a natural disinclination to pursue the truth beyond a certain distance, to uncover its nakedness and most secret places: the final twist in the argument is not cynical, as it would have been with a Montaigne, but merely the inevitable compromise which the Englishman can always, even in matters of eternal truth, discover as the justification of his faith and the means to his end.

Hobbes's compromise, the little twist to the tail of his argument, is made possible by the imaginary compact which he assumes as the basis of government. His object is to establish securely an absolute monarch whose unquestioned authority should be able to compose the religious-political disorders of his time. The compact is not between the subjects and the monarch, but of every subject with every

other subject, and by thus contracting themselves out of a free state of nature by an unbreakable bond which binds them to the sovereign, without in any way binding him to them, they establish authoritarian government on the most unshakable foundations. Once Hobbes has got his argument to go in the desired direction, atheistical sceptic though he be, his whole conception of government and politics is unconsciously moulded by the Christian conception of the government of the universe and the doctrine of original sin. The position of the monarch, to whom his subjects are bound by the obligation of absolute obedience but who is not bound by any reciprocal obligations to his subjects, is exactly that of God to His creatures according to Christianity. The idea, so closely connected with the Christian doctrine of sin, that the sinner can only be kept on the right path and induced to do his duty by an elaborate system of rewards and punishments, is immediately taken over by him as the basis of political psychology. On the very first page of his book he tells us that "that great LEVIATHAN called a COMMONWEALTH, or STATE, is but an Artificiall Man", and "*Reward and Punishment* (by which fastned to the seate of the Sovereignty, every joynt and member is moved to performe his duty) are the *Nerves*, that do the same in the Body Naturall". The law of the Commonwealth, like the law of God, is an edict of Authority, a command which requires instant acceptance and obedience, practically the only exception being a command by the Sovereign to the subject to kill himself. The breaking of the law or resistance to Authority is a crime and all crimes are sins. "A Crime, is a sinne, consisting in the Committing (by Deed, or Word) of that which the Law forbiddeth, or the Omission of what it hath commanded. So that every Crime is a

sinne; but not every sinne a Crimq.”¹ Indeed it seems to follow from one passage that, according to Hobbes, the greatest of all sins which a man can commit on this earth is to resist the government, and the authority of the State overrides all other authorities, even those of religion and conscience. Suppose you are the subject of an infidel monarch whose law requires you to reject Christ, forswear Christianity, and publicly accept, let us say, Muhammadanism — what are you to do? Hobbes would appear to maintain that, even in such a case, the greater sin is to resist the civil sovereign. “When the Civill Sovereign”, he says, “is an Infidel, every one of his own Subjects that resisteth him, sinneth against the Laws of God (for such as are the Laws of Nature) and rejecteth the counsell of the Apostles, that admonisheth all Christians to obey their Princes, and all Children and Servants to obey their Parents, and Masters, in all things. And for their *Faith*, it is internall, and invisible; they have the licence that Naaman had, and need not put themselves into danger for it.”²

Finally, there is another aspect of Hobbes’s political theory which shows how deeply, if unconsciously, his mind has been influenced by the Christian conception of divine rule and the Christian doctrine of sin.³ Before the compact is made and government, therefore, established, man enjoys, he maintains, a state of nature, a state of continual war and the most abject misery, “necessarily consequent to the naturall Passions of men”. The whole object of Government is therefore to set up an Authority strong enough to restrain these natural passions of men, a “visible Power to keep them in awe, and tye them by feare of punishment to the performance of

¹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Part II. chapter xxvii.

² *Ibid.* Part III. chapter xliii.

their Covenants, and observation of those Lawes of Nature set down in the fourteenth and fifteenth Chapters". Here the original state of nature answers in every respect politically to the original state of sin, postulated religiously by Christianity. And just as the Christian has to be restrained by fear of divine punishment from sinning against God's laws, so the whole political system is based upon fear; the citizen has to be tied by fear of punishment to the performance of his political duty, terrorized from following his natural inclination to political sin.¹

Hobbes was a profound philosopher, and at the same time a sceptic, an atheist, and an opportunist. And yet, as we have seen, his political psychology is largely determined by Christian beliefs and the Christian doctrine of sin. The influence of these religious beliefs did not end with Hobbes and the seventeenth century. All through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and even to-day in the twentieth, one can watch them supporting the old communal psychology of authoritarian government and in conflict with the new psychology of democracy. One can see them in Burke as soon as he is confronted by the first stirrings of democracy in the French Revolution. The magnificence of his language and the superficial layer of political philosophy cannot conceal the fact that, in the *Reflections* and the *Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs*, his attitude is that of a Hebrew Prophet, a Savonarola, a John Knox, a Calvin. Both his political philosophy and psychology are founded upon his sense of political sin. His whole argument assumes that the "people" are naturally evil and corrupt, that they can only be kept from sin by a system of restraints imposed by Authority, and that, if they have power, they will

¹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Part II. chapter xvii.

inevitably use it for wickedness and destruction. And so deeply penetrated is he by the Christian doctrine of sin that he cannot conceive that those whose political opinions differ from his own may be merely mistaken; they *must* be wicked and corrupt. Note, for instance, how in the following passage the adjectives applied by him to the opinions with which he disagreed—opinions which, within a little more than fifty years, were to be accepted almost universally as political commonplaces—reveal this obsession:

No man can say how far he will go, who joins with those who are avowedly going to the utmost extremities. What security is there for stopping short at all in these wild conceits? Why, neither more nor less than this—that the moral sentiments of some few among them do put some check on their savage theories. . . . In this school the moral sentiments must grow weaker and weaker every day. . . . Their principles are wild and wicked. But let justice be done even to phrenzy and villainy.¹

This religious attitude towards politics did not, unfortunately, end with Burke and the French Revolution. It persisted throughout the nineteenth century, and persists to-day, in the almost universal assumption that, if anyone differs from us politically, he must be wicked. You may see it in the attitude of Marx and of all the Marxian socialists towards capitalists; you may see it in the attitude of Gladstone to Disraeli and of Queen Victoria and the English Tory country gentleman to Gladstone; you may see it in 1930 in the attitude of thousands of Englishmen to the Russian Bolsheviks. But in no department of human life and of the European brain has it shown greater persistence and vitality

¹ Burke, *Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs*.

than in that which is concerned with law and order, crime and punishment. You have only to go into any police court or criminal court in England to-day, and you will hear a police magistrate or judge addressing a convicted prisoner, not as a man who has broken a social regulation, but as a wicked man, a sinner, upon whose head it is the judge's duty to bring the vengeance of God and society, the punishment of unhappiness. It is significant that the whole modern theory of crime and punishment that has developed from humanitarianism—and hence indirectly, if not directly, from democracy—runs counter to this conception of the criminal as a sinner and wicked man and to the system which aims at preventing crime by making the law-breaker unhappy. But the religious psychology of sin and reward and punishment so long and so powerfully moulded the European mind that it still rules unquestioned in our criminal courts and our prisons.

The religious network of ideas behind Christianity is, thus, in many different ways inconsistent with the social network of ideas about happiness which lies behind democracy. The inconsistency led to conflict all through the nineteenth century, both in the minds of individuals who tried to combine and embrace simultaneously both sets of ideas, and in the body of society where translation into practice of the democratic doctrine of happiness has inevitably weakened or destroyed belief **and practice** of the religious doctrines. Before leaving the subject, it is worth observing the curious history of one particular variety of the religious belief. Christianity teaches, as I have pointed out, that all men are sinners, that earthly happiness is of little account, and that sinners should be made unhappy for their own good. It is not surprising that many Christian

sects who accepted these eternal and divine truths should have taken a further step and have argued from them that, therefore, nearly all forms of earthly happiness are sinful and that pleasure is an evil. Puritan doctrine and practice come very near to holding that it is wrong to be happy, and there are points at which the doctrine of all Christian Churches comes very near to that of Puritanism. Wherever during the last fifty or hundred years, democracy has succeeded in establishing itself, one may observe what may be called the standardization of happiness. In every class it is considered the right and natural thing for everyone to enjoy himself or herself from day to day as much as possible, and the standards of this enjoyment, of this material, day-to-day happiness, are the same for all people and all classes. Everyone all the time is going to the theatre, the films, or the palais de dance; everyone listens to music on the wireless; everyone has a gramophone; nearly everyone has a car or a motor-bicycle and goes off into the country to enjoy himself on Saturday and Sunday; everyone wears smart clothes all the time. This social development is exactly what one would have expected from an acceptance of the communal psychology of democracy and the establishment of a social and political framework of democratic institutions. It is the practice by society of the principle that happiness is a good thing and that all have an equal right to happiness. But it is also antagonistic to the Christian and particularly to Puritan practice and doctrine. The antagonism was and still is extremely obvious in a country like Britain where Puritanism has had a strong hold. All through the nineties and the first quarter of the present century the middle and upper classes fought a losing fight against the tendency for

everyone to enjoy himself when not at work. Almost every considerable widening of the circle of communal happiness has been opposed or deplored. There is no doubt that the opposition has been due to an unconscious feeling that for so many people to enjoy themselves so often must be wrong. "Old-fashioned" people and distinguished clergymen still are convinced that there must be something wrong because Sunday is not a day of unrelieved boredom and gloom to practically the whole population. The enormous increase of enjoyment among the masses due to cheap literature and magazines, to the cinemas, to the popularization of gramophones and wireless, to the football leagues, to the motor-bicycle and the facilities of modern transport, to the invention of artificial silk, has been condemned and, wherever possible, obstructed, for all kinds of different reasons. The cheap literature and magazines are "trash"; the people who night after night flock into the cinemas "get no good out of it" and only waste their money; the young who no longer are content to sit through the evenings or on half-holidays in stuffy overcrowded rooms in dingy streets or to stand about with nothing to do at street corners or to listen to clergymen droning out the nightmares and fairy-tales invented by Hebrew tribes in Asia some two or three thousand years ago, but go off to a dance hall or dash into the country on a motor-bicycle, are being ruined by the "modern craze for excitement"; young women of the working classes who find pleasure in making themselves look attractive in brightly coloured dresses, and short sleeves, and silk stockings, instead of hiding their good looks, as their grandmothers did, in garments of a hideous dreary drabness and slatternliness, are "immodest".

DEMOCRACY

The Puritan opposition to the democratization and standardization of happiness has been, for the most part, a failure. It still prevents a good many people in England from enjoying themselves on Sundays; by maintaining a system of censorship it still prevents people from reading a certain number of books or seeing a certain number of plays and films which would give them pleasure; it occasionally prevents someone from buying a box of chocolates or a glass of beer when they want to do so. But the failure of Puritanism to withstand the democratization of happiness has not been merely negative. When two systems of ideas like that of the religious and the democratic attitude towards happiness come into conflict in communal psychology, that system which fails to maintain itself inevitably, if gradually, suffers a positive disintegration. And so to-day a corollary of the fact that most people instinctively accept the fundamental attitude of democracy towards happiness is the fact that most people no longer accept the fundamental beliefs of Puritanism and Christianity.

It is time now to return to the point reached on p. 198 before we started on what to some will appear to have been a digression. It has not in fact been a digression. We had arrived at a conviction that in the communal psychology of early democrats their beliefs about communal happiness were fundamental. Now we have seen that these democratic beliefs were only part of a profound and wide change of attitude towards happiness in communal psychology, and that this change can be observed first producing a generalized disturbance or uneasiness in the pioneer minds of thinkers and writers, like Swift, Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Rousseau, and later becoming particularized in all kinds of beliefs

and movements, sometimes perhaps inconsistent or hostile, but always closely connected, from humanitarianism to socialism. This is in itself an important fact with regard to democracy and its history. But it also throws some light upon the wider subject of this book, the connection between political and social actions and political and social psychology. If we examine the history of communal psychology, we find a general change in the attitude towards communal happiness developing in the early part of the eighteenth century, discordant with the social structure and political institutions of the age, and this general, diffused attitude gradually breaking up and condensing, like a nebula, into several different social theories and movements and political beliefs and doctrines, still more discordant with the structure of society, and therefore revolutionary. If, on the other hand, we turn to the history of events, we find first a struggle between those who stand for the existing social structure and those who profess the new beliefs, and later, during the nineteenth century, a very considerable destruction or modification of those parts of the social structure which were inconsistent with the new attitude and the new social and political doctrines.

The communal psychology which produces or supports a movement like that of democracy does not consist of a chain of syllogisms or logical arguments, but of a network of beliefs or mental attitudes, some of which may even be inconsistent with others. Our investigation so far has revealed the fact that the democracy of the early democrats was founded upon certain beliefs with regard to happiness or a certain attitude towards communal happiness. One may sum up the primary doctrine of early democracy by saying that these democrats held that government

should be based on a social right to equal happiness, and therefore upon a common purpose or a social contract to pursue the common benefit of all the citizens. But when we examined the beliefs of the early democrats, as explained by themselves in the two famous Declarations, we found that they began from a trinity of metaphysical postulates. They maintained not only that all men have a right to happiness, but that all men are born equal and have a right to liberty. Thus from the beginning there have been in the psychology of democracy three different motifs: happiness, equality, and liberty or freedom: the motifs have persisted, distinct and yet inter-related, all through the subsequent history of democratic thought and action, and the various patterns which democratic beliefs and government have taken at various times have been closely connected with the different combinations of these three motifs in communal psychology. One of the simplest and most classical of such patterns and combinations can be observed already in the two Declarations. The new attitude towards communal happiness which developed in the eighteenth century in so many different directions led, as we have seen, by one channel to the conviction that government should aim at communal happiness and should therefore be based upon a common purpose or social contract to pursue the common benefit of all. But the simplest possible combination of the happiness motif with the equality and freedom motifs would lead again to an almost precisely similar idea of government as based upon rights and common purpose rather than upon property and privilege. Thus the early democrat's beliefs about the object of political government, which derived from his attitude to communal happiness, were reinforced by his attitude to equality and

freedom. And his attitude to equality and freedom was, like his attitude to happiness and, indeed, like all elements in communal psychology, not a clear-cut, rigid, and logical system of political beliefs which can be pinned down in the form of syllogisms and isolated for dissection on the historian's table; it was itself part of a diffused and developing attitude in the minds of Europeans to the ideas of equality and freedom. In order to understand the relation between democracy and the ideas of equality and freedom, it is necessary to examine this nebular attitude which, as was the case with the attitude to happiness, split up and condensed, in the minds of individuals and the doctrines of sects and parties, into every variety of belief.

DEMOCRACY AND EQUALITY

The idea of social or political equality is closely connected with the consciousness of individuality. If you regard every man and woman as a social or political unit, you are already beginning to regard them from the point of view of social regulation and government as in some sense equal; but you cannot really begin to regard them all as social or political units until you see them all as individuals. Just as a profound change took place in the communal psychology of Europe with regard to happiness between 1700 and 1800, so, too, during the same period there was a profound change in the consciousness of individuality. This curious psychological revolution has been noticed by a good many writers, but the best account and analysis of the history of the consciousness of human individuality will be found in the remarkable and difficult book, *The Ascent of Humanity*, by Gerald Heard (1929). Mr. Heard argues that a change in this consciousness began in the seventeenth

century, and no doubt he is right; but it was during the eighteenth century that the new mental attitude spread to the masses and helped to produce that crisis which psychologically separates antiquity from modernity, the French Revolution. Before the eighteenth century the consciousness and recognition of individuality was sporadic and, like so many other things, a class privilege. A person was very rarely regarded as an individual; he was merely a member of a group or class; while the modern, subjective sense of one's own individuality was extremely rare and usually, even when it did exist, was thin and weak.

I do not propose to give a detailed analysis of this psychological revolution; it is only necessary for my immediate purpose to indicate its nature by one or two examples. The change in the general mental attitude of Europeans can be seen most clearly in literature. Take any three writers who wrote before the Christian era, let us say Sophocles, Thucydides, and Virgil; three who wrote between the Christian era and 1700, say Dante, Milton, and Racine; and lastly three who wrote after 1900, say Keats, Flaubert, and Ibsen. If you examine the minds of these nine men you will observe that the first six belong to the same species of animal, but one which is radically different from that of the other three. Yet 2000 years separated Sophocles from Racine, while only 200 separated Racine from Flaubert. The difference is in the whole mental attitude, in the reaction of the mind to things, scenes, events, and the universe. The species to which Sophocles and Racine belonged took everything at its face value; "the ancients" did not look round the corner or beneath the surface; they never turned their eyes from the hard, bright world immediately in front of them to peer into the dim regions of their own mind and personality. They

have a calmness, a dignity, a detached impersonality which do not exist in Keats, Flaubert, and Ibsen. The difference is largely due to a difference in self-consciousness; the consciousness of one's own individuality, which is a common characteristic of ordinary, plain men and women to-day, is rare even in the subtlest and rarest minds of antiquity, and when it does exist, it is comparatively weak and fitful. Montaigne is a remarkable exception, and it is precisely this consciousness of himself as an individual which makes Montaigne seem so unlike his contemporaries, so much nearer ourselves than anyone else born before 1700; he was the first modern.

This psychological difference is still more obvious in the individual's relation to and representation of other people than it is in his own self-consciousness. In the whole of literature before 1700 there are hardly any characters which, if you compare them with fictional characters of the nineteenth century, are not "types" rather than individuals. In the drama, which before the eighteenth century was almost the only form of fiction, the audience is not invited to watch the tragedy and comedy of individual character, but of personified types, generalized human beings. Even Shakespeare's characters, which may at first sight seem highly individualized, are not individuals if you compare them with the characters of Flaubert, Ibsen, or even Strindberg. *Othello* is the tragedy of a jealous man and of all jealous men; the genius of Shakespeare makes *Othello* himself extraordinarily real, but no one can doubt that there must have been hundreds of *Othellos* always alive in the world at any one moment. The *Kreutzer Sonata* is also the tragedy of a jealous man, but not of all jealous men; he is not as "real" as *Othello*, and Tolstoy is

much more intent on the moral than Shakespeare, but that only makes it the more remarkable that the hero of the *Kreutzer Sonata* should be so unmistakably *sui generis*; there has never been and there never will be another "I" exactly like that "I". In other words, *Othello* is the tragedy of a jealous man, the *Kreutzer Sonata* of a jealous individual. Or compare Lear with Martin Petrovitch Harlov in *A Lear of the Steppes*. Lear is real, alive, a man, but a man as most men were in Shakespeare's time; he is not an individual in the sense that Harlov is. We know, for instance, that much talking gave Harlov asthma; the fact does not surprise us, nor does it surprise us that the author records the fact, it is the kind of fact which might be recorded of an individual. It is not impossible, one feels, that King Lear suffered from asthma if he talked much, but it is quite impossible that he or Shakespeare should have mentioned the fact, because neither is conscious of his individuality in the way in which Turgenev and Harlov are conscious of Harlov's individuality. Or compare Rosalind in *As You Like It* with Hilda in *The Masterbuilder*, or Lady Macbeth with Hedda Gabler, and you will feel the same difference. The difference is the more extraordinary because no dramatist has ever been subtler or more realistic in character-drawing than Shakespeare. Indeed, the characters of Hamlet and Falstaff show that, like Montaigne, he was one of those rare and exceptional men before the eighteenth century who had the modern sense of individuality. Yet compared to an Ibsen character or even a character in any trumpery modern play, Hamlet and Falstaff will be seen to retain something of the "humour", that ancient conception of character which is the negation of individuality.

The drama, as I remarked, was before the eight-

eenth century practically the only form of literary fiction. The fact is itself a proof of the difference between ancient and modern psychology upon which I am insisting. Many puzzled literary critics and historians have tried to explain why the world had to wait until the eighteenth century for the invention of the modern novel and until the nineteenth for its evolution into the most popular literary form that the world has ever known. European literature has a history of, let us say, 2500 years. For 2300 out of those 2500 years, no one thought of writing stories about ordinary persons and everyday life, about the psychological adventures of individuals who might have been met any day in the streets of Athens or Rome, of Paris or London. There were romances and tales of love or adventure in which the heroes and heroines were little more than "humours", generalized human beings themselves personifying abstractions, romance, love, adventure, wickedness or innocence, the chivalry of Don Quixote or the optimism of Dr. Pangloss. But for 2300 years no one wrote and no one read a novel, a story which depended for its appeal upon the psychological relations between individuals. Suddenly, after 2300 years, a London printer writes *Pamela*, the story of a maidservant, and the first modern novel because it is the story of a maidservant represented as psychologically an individual. There is nothing in literary history to compare with the enormous development of the novel which took place in the next 200 years. Inventions in printing, the spread of education, and democracy have all been suggested as causes of this astonishing phenomenon, and, no doubt, are not unconnected with it. But the primary cause of this evolution was the new consciousness of individuality. The psychological novel as we know it could not possibly be written by

anyone whose natural way of seeing and feeling his fellow-men was as members of groups and classes and as humours or types of moral qualities. It could not be written by anyone who had not normally and unconsciously that introspective attitude of mind which is the most characteristic accompaniment of a highly developed sense of individuality and which is so common in writers who lived after the year 1700, so rare in those who lived before it. A man who does not feel and dissect his own ego, and who regards other people not as a number of other egos, but as members of a class, group, or type—which may vary, of course, infinitely from such a class as “my own family” or the aristocracy to such types as “rogues” or “innocent maidens”—necessarily has a restricted field in fiction. He may write a picaresque novel or *Artamène; ou le grand Cyrus*; he may even write *Don Quixote* or *Pantagruel* or *Candide*; he cannot write *Tristram Shandy* or *Emma*, *Le Père Goriot* or *Madame Bovary*, *War and Peace* or *The Possessed*. But when one is considering the relation between communal psychology and the evolution of literary forms, one must allow for the psychology of the readers as well as of the writers. Had there lived and written in the sixteenth century a Jane Austen or a Balzac, it is safe to say that there would have been no audience to read them—not because the readers could not read, but because they had not that consciousness of and interest in individuality without which it is impossible to appreciate *Pride and Prejudice* or *Illusions Perdues*. The popularization of the novel in the nineteenth century was made possible by the change in communal psychology, the consciousness of individuality, spreading to the masses. Even to-day the purely psychological and highly introspective type of novel is never popular; ordinary people have not a sufficiently

developed consciousness of individuality to make it interesting or intelligible.

The effect of the change in the consciousness of personality is clearly seen in the development of the modern novel. The same change in communal psychology also caused the tremendous development in another literary form, biography. But the subject of this chapter is politics and social organization, and we must leave literature and return to them. Not that political and literary forms are produced by separate compartments in the human mind; the attitude which a man has to the universe, to himself, to his fellow-men will affect both his view of himself as a citizen or subject and his conception and appreciation of a book, and the same course and oscillations of communal psychology can be traced in politics and in literature. Thus the change in the psychology of personality or individuality, which in literature helped to produce the novel and the biography and to transform the drama of Racine into the drama of Ibsen, in politics helped to produce democracy. The communal attitude to individuality in the ancient world was reflected in its structure of society and in its ideas of government. Very few people, as we have seen, had the modern man's consciousness of his own individuality; the pre-eighteenth century man was aware of himself as a member of a group or class rather than as an ego. He was even less aware of other people as individuals; they were always to him members of groups or classes. Hence the class structure of his society and the universal acceptance of privilege as a principle of government. To those who are accustomed to regard everyone as an individual, privilege seems necessarily inequitable and illogical, but if you regard people primarily as members of groups or classes, privilege

DEMOCRACY

is a natural and logical institution. The differences between groups are felt to imply that certain things are appropriate to one group and not to another. Even to-day you will find certain isolated and insulated sections of society in which, for some reason, the old psychology is enforced or encouraged and the sense of individuality suppressed, and, wherever that is the case, privilege persists as the natural principle of regulating social relations. The primitive type of communal psychology is found in its purest form to-day in armies and in English public schools. Military discipline definitely aims at suppressing the individual and converting him into the soldier; he loses his personality and becomes a number, a unit in his group or regiment, while within the regiment again he is docketed and ticketed as a member of a sub-group graded according to "rank". The whole army system is at the same time permeated by the principle of privilege. Every group and sub-group has its privileges—a regiment of wearing a particular piece of black cloth or a particular button in a special place, one rank of saluting and another of not saluting, one group of being shot and the other of being hanged. So, too, in the English public school everything is done to prevent the growth of any consciousness of individuality, to suppress the individual and turn him into an English gentleman. The following is a description of the principle of our English system of public school education by a well-informed and fair-minded foreigner:¹

The boy, placed betimes in a corporate life, is thereby to be trained to be a citizen rather than an individual. This close and cloistered association of young people, with its ready scorn of everything contrary to their own ideals, tends to transform the individual who might seek to rise

¹ Wilhelm Dibelius, *England*, English translation, 1930, p. 465.

above the type into the prominent representative of the community. Every opportunity is taken of bringing home to him the honour of belonging to *this* community. . . . In this atmosphere, the standard of values is not what the boy thinks good or bad, but what the community regards as right or wrong. There can be no appeal from the verdict of the community to the verdict of an individual, whether that individual be a master or the boy's own conscience. . . . Throughout the system there exists no stimulus to individuality, to being in any respect distinct or different from one's surroundings.

Thus the communal psychology of the public school is generically the same as that of a regiment. The boy, as a unit in his school, must be animated with the right feeling of *esprit de corps*, a feeling which belongs to the psychology of the herd rather than to the psychology of the individual. Within the school the boy is always a member of a group, grade, or rank, his behaviour must always conform to the traditional behaviour of the group or grade to which he belongs. In such a system there is no place or tolerance for individuality or the consciousness of individuality. And here again the natural accompaniment of this psychology is a system of privilege. The school itself will have its own special privileges and inside the school every group has its special privileges, from that of wearing a particular kind of collar to that of flogging or being flogged.

Property may be regarded as a peculiar form of privilege, and thus the predemocratic social and political system, founded upon property and privilege, was the natural, instinctive reflection of a communal psychology under which people were acutely conscious of their own and other people's position as members of groups or classes, but were unconscious or feebly conscious of their own and

DEMOCRACY

other people's individuality. Privilege and inequality are two sides of the same social phenomenon, and must always appear in social relations where the man is not felt and thought of as an individual, but as the member of a group or class, and the privileges of the worker and disabilities of the bourgeoisie in Soviet Russia spring from the same recesses of the human mind as did the dove-cots of the nobility and the *taille* of the *canaille* under the ancient regime. *Vice versa*, as soon as men are felt and thought of as individuals politically or socially, a system of privilege and inequality is in danger. Social or political consciousness of individuality shows itself as awareness of every man as a social or political unit. The "humours" or types of old plays and the privileges of the ancient regime came from the same inability to see the world as a world of individuals; the little shift in human psychology which caused the eighteenth century so to see the world was responsible both for the character of Uncle Toby and the birth of democracy. If you want to understand what the shift meant in the sphere of politics, you have only to read the opening of chapter ii. of Book II. in Carlyle's *French Revolution*, where he wishes to show the reader the injustices and disabilities under which the working classes suffered before the Revolution. Writing in the nineteenth century, instinctively he knows that all he has to do is to shift our view from the workers as a class to the workers as individuals, to make in two sentences the psychological revolution which historically has already stretched over two or three centuries:

With the working people again, it is not well. Unlucky! For there are from twenty to twenty-five millions of them. Whom, however, we lump together into a kind of dim compendious unity, monstrous but dim, far off, as the

canaille; or, more humanely, as "the masses". Masses indeed; and yet, singular to say, if, with an effort of imagination, thou follow them, over broad France, into their clay hovels, into their garrets and hutches, the masses consist all of units. Every unit of whom has his own heart and sorrows; stands covered there with his own skin, and if you prick him he will bleed.

As soon as the eighteenth century began dimly to distinguish in the *canaille* or masses political units, which could be described sentimentally as each covered by its own skin and certain to bleed if pricked, it was on the road to those doctrines of and experiments in political equality which are characteristic of democracy. If you regard every man as politically an individual, a person and not simply a member of a class, a political unit, it is natural for you to regard each unit as equal from the point of view of government and politics, for if each is really to be politically a unit, each must count as one, that is to be equal, politically.¹ Like the attitude towards happiness, this conception of political individuality is profoundly revolutionary. Nearly all the greatest ethical revolutionaries and social iconoclasts, from Christ to Tolstoy, have tried to get the world to see that individually everyone, even the meanest, should count as one, and "therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets". It may be the law of God and His prophets, but no one before the middle of the eighteenth century considered it as conceivably a possible law of man and political

¹ Godwin begins his chapter on the "General Features of Democracy" chapter xiv. of Book V. in *An Inquiry Concerning Political Justice*, 1793, thus: "Democracy is a system of government according to which every member of a society is considered as a man and nothing more. So far as positive regulation is concerned . . . every man is regarded as equal."

society. If believed in and acted upon, it would have destroyed practically the whole of society before the French Revolution, and even to-day it still remains inconsistent with probably three-quarters of our social and political institutions. It may perhaps in the end prove true that the human mind is so constituted, with its subterranean ancestry of animal passions, that it will never consent to human society being ordered on the principle that every man and woman is an individual and, as such, must count socially, and therefore politically and economically, as an equal unit, but in that case it may also well be true that the human mind is so constituted that it will never consent to be civilized.

This notion of social or political individuality involving social or political equality, it will be observed, dovetails into the new beliefs with regard to the importance of happiness which we have previously investigated. The conviction that not my happiness in particular, but everyone's and anyone's happiness is important, is subtly and closely connected with the conviction that A, B, C, D, E, F, G, and H are just as much individuals as I am. If you regard A, B, and C, not as individuals, but as members of a superior class with certain appropriate privileges, and D, E, and F, not as individuals, but as members of an inferior class with certain appropriate disabilities, the important thing in their social relations will naturally appear to you to be not individual happiness, but the rights and duties, the privileges and disabilities attached to each man as a member of his class. Here again we are beginning to see more clearly the nature of communal psychology and the way in which it affects political action. In democratic psychology there is no causal connection, no logical train of reasoning, between the beliefs

with regard to happiness and the beliefs with regard to equality. The early democrat did not believe that the happiness of each man was of equal importance because each man was an individual and therefore a socially equal unit, though when he came to argue with people like Burke and write books and promulgate declarations of the rights of men, he may himself have said and believed so. On the contrary, as soon as you begin to analyse the communal psychology of the eighteenth century, you see that these several strands of belief with regard to individuality, equality, and happiness are all facets of the same, new attitude towards human life and social relations. The mental attitude, originally vague and nebular, rapidly condenses and splits up into all kinds of new perceptions, beliefs, theories, ideals: here the new consciousness of individuality, there the humanitarianism of Voltaire or the utilitarianism of Bentham, elsewhere the foundations of political democracy. These condensations are not always mutually consistent, but even when they result in hostile and contradictory political theories and systems, they tend, because of their common origin, to support and dovetail into one another. Thus the doctrine of the rights of man, which had its origin in the new attitude towards individuality, may have been inconsistent logically with the doctrines of utilitarianism, which had their origin in the new attitude towards happiness, yet they dovetail into one another through the history of democracy and have often been embraced and reconciled in the beliefs of democrats. On the other hand, there is always open conflict between the beliefs which spring from the new mental attitude and those which have their origin in the old. In history Rousseau and Bentham may march side by side along the same road towards the same goal,

but Paine and Burke must engage in a struggle which can only end with the annihilation of one of them.

Yet, though the new psychology of the eighteenth century, out of which our own society of to-day has developed, was irreconcilable with the older psychology out of which eighteenth-century society itself had developed, it was in subtle and unexpected ways influenced by it. The past holds and moulds the human mind even more powerfully than it does the human body, and the most revolutionary will usually be found to be somewhere or other still firmly in the grasp of the dead hand of history. For instance, those ideas of natural rights which were so popular with the philosophical pioneers and played a great part in forming democratic dogma were themselves largely derived from the psychology and society with which the reformers were in conflict. Where a man is regarded primarily as a member of a class or group, not as an individual, and the community is envisaged as composed of classes rather than of individuals, the idea of privilege is, as we have seen, dominant in social psychology. But a privilege is a right, and under the ancient regime a man's social and political position was determined by the rights which belonged to him as the member of a particular class. Now when the pioneers of modern democracy began to see people as individuals and to urge that their position in society should be determined by the fact that they were social or political units—not members of a privileged aristocracy or unprivileged *canaille*—it was easy for them to think of the individual as having social and political "rights" analogous to those possessed under the existing regime by the privileged classes. It is quite wrong to dismiss superciliously the "natural rights" of the *philosophes* and the Rights of

Man of the Declarations and Tom Paine as merely "nonsense on stilts". Those who believed in or proclaimed them often gave absurd and confused reasons for doing so, but the kernel of their beliefs contained a solid core of great and permanent political importance. It is possible to carry on the business of birth and death which we call society under a system by which a man's economic and political position in that society is determined by the rights and privileges, the duties and disabilities, which are assigned to him as a member of a class. In such a society, for the purpose of government, there are no individuals, no men and women; there are only members of classes, owners of property or privileges, payers of taxes, sons of fathers. But suppose someone suddenly says: "All these men are merely men. Each is an individual. As an individual everyone counts as one, and all those ones are socially equal, for society is not composed of the sons of fathers, but of individuals." The man who says this is looking at the world of men from a new angle, and in doing so he has seen or created a political truth, a new system of social organization. And he will not be talking nonsense on stilts if he goes on to say to those who cannot see the individuals, but only the sons of fathers: "Society is composed of individuals; its economic and political units are individuals; its economic and political system should be carried on in the interests of individuals. You have built your society upon a hierarchy of rights and privileges, and I will talk to you in your own language. In my society there will also be a hierarchy of rights. The highest of all rights socially are those which belong to each man as an individual, a man, the ultimate and equal social unit. They are 'natural rights' and the 'rights of man'—the rights which naturally belong to him

as a man and individual member of society, and which, therefore, as a member of society, he carries with him through life, an inalienable possession. And the fact that the object of society is the interests of all its individual members, and that every member is to be regarded as an equal social unit, means that his social and political rights as an individual take precedence over any of those rights and privileges which you attach to a man as the son of his father or the possessor of 10,000 acres of land."

In the early democratic conception of natural rights there is, therefore, a core of truth and sense which retains its importance and validity in our own contemporary social and political problems. The false and irrelevant analogies and arguments about a state of nature and sacred rights, which grew up in such profusion during the eighteenth-century controversies that the fundamental idea became obscured in a jungle of philosophical and historical theory, may be ignored. The fundamental idea remains true and important if stated in terms of psychology rather than of metaphysics and history. There is a sense in which it is even true to say that his individuality is naturally inherent in every man, while there is no sense in which one man is naturally a duke and another a dustman. If then the individual is regarded as the primary social and political unit, the individual will immediately acquire social and political rights, devolving from his individuality, and these rights are of the same kind as those which belong to the duke and the dustman, qua duke and dustman, in a society in which dukes and dustmen are regarded as primary social and political units. The community in which the rights and interests of each man as an individual are of primary importance will be very different from a community in which the

rights and interests of each man as the member of a class are of primary importance. The democratic ideal is, therefore, in conflict with every social and political system in which class rights or interests are accorded precedence or superior validity to those of individuals. In the eighteenth century it found its antagonist mainly in the social system inherited from feudalism, in which the individual had no rights and his interests were completely subordinated to those of the aristocratic and privileged classes. During the nineteenth century the struggle was between democracy and a system in which the rights and interests of individuals were subordinated to those of property owners, though many democrats themselves failed to realize the conflict and, therefore, muddled the waters of pure democracy. Nemesis has come to them to-day out of Russia, for it is not impossible that the struggle will shift in the twentieth century, and democracy will find its most dangerous antagonist in a system which subordinates the rights and interests of individuals to those of a class which is known vaguely as the proletariat.

What we have discovered with regard to the democrat's attitude to individuality and natural rights throws light upon the essential nature of democratic equality. The human mind has an almost unlimited capacity for devising learned nonsense and for inventing bad reasons for its sound beliefs, but it has never shown itself more fertile in talking unnecessary nonsense than in the controversies between democrats and their opponents on the subject of equality. We have already observed the astonishing spectacle of an intelligent man like Mr. Mencken in twentieth-century America believing that he has driven the last nail into democracy's coffin when he has remade the discovery

DEMOCRACY

that all men are not in all respects equal and that the mind of an ice-wagon driver differs materially from the mind of Mr. Mencken. Mr. Mencken may have the excuse of thinking that any stick is good enough for beating a dead dog, and any nail good enough for the coffin of American democracy, but it is even more astonishing to remember how many democrats have been lured by their opponents into talking still greater nonsense and arguing that all men are in every respect equal. There is only one sense in which the nature of human equality is relevant to the fundamental doctrines of democracy. Democracy is not a branch of science or metaphysics: it is primarily psychological, an attitude of mind towards human government, a conviction as to the just and the reasonable method for determining the social position and political rights of the individual in human communities. It had its roots, as we have seen, in the awareness of individuality, in the consciousness that in a civilized community everyone should be treated as an individual. From this consciousness sprang the primary democratic doctrine that the individual should be the social and political unit. In that sense, and only in that sense, does democracy imply and require equality. When it is a question of laws or social opportunity or welfare or privilege or political rights, the democrat regards each man as an individual and therefore equal from the point of view of value. In the eye of God or cosmically, says the Christian, everyone, from Lazarus to Dives, counts as one, and in the eye of the State or politically, says the democrat, everyone should count as one. Both are thinking not of complete qualitative equality, but of the equality of units of value. In that sense the democrat may say quite reasonably that "all men are created

equal". And it follows that Mr. Mencken and others are completely wrong in thinking that democracy is exploded by the discovery that men are not and never can be made physically or mentally equal. Democracy, like Christianity, would be meaningless, if all human beings were identical; the whole point of Christianity is that, though in fact men differ morally, intellectually, and materially, each one is treated by God as equal and of equal cosmic value; the whole point of democracy is that, though in fact men are unequal in physical, mental, and moral endowments, each should be treated by the State as of equal social and political value. The relation between human inequality and equality required by democracy is shown clearly in such a purely democratic doctrine as that of Bentham, quoted above, that "the happiness of the worst man of the species is as much an integrant of the whole mass of human happiness as is that of the best man".

Much of the confused nonsense which has been talked and written on the subject of democratic equality from the time of Godwin to that of Mr. Mencken is due to ignorance of the nature of communal psychology and to the passionate delusions which nearly everyone mistakes for eternal truths in political arguments. Democracy is primarily, as we have seen, an attitude of mind, a psychological matrix which, once it has left its stamp upon the mind, determines in what way it shall regard the anonymous individual and the community. It is secondarily a judgment as to the best way of regulating the relations between the individual and the community. The democrat begins to talk nonsense only when he begins to confuse his own vision with that of his particular deity, or to identify his political

beliefs and ideals with laws of nature. What he ought to say is: "I see every man and woman as an individual, and all men and women are born equal in so far as they are individuals. History shows that where the State treats the class and not the individual as the basis of social organization, where class or birth determine the distribution of power and privilege and superior or inferior legal rights, society must be bad and barbarous, for socially the superior class is arrogant, unjust, avaricious, stupid, and tyrannous, while the inferior is servile, poor, depressed, envious, and ignorant. In a good society the individual should be treated as the social and political unit and as of equal social and political value." That is all that the democrat ought to say about the essential nature of democratic equality, but he has often been foolish enough to think that it is necessary to prove that all human beings are by a law of God or nature in some way transcendently equal before he can argue that the State ought to treat all men as equal for certain specific purposes. He might as reasonably think it necessary to prove that it is a law of God and nature that a human leg should never get between a cricket ball and three pieces of wood before he could argue that an umpire ought to treat a man as out who breaks the l.b.w. rule.

The opponent of democracy, on the other hand, has no right to treat human inequality as an argument against the primary democratic belief with regard to equality. Even Mr. Mencken does not imagine that it is absurd for the criminal law to treat a murderer with blue eyes and a murderer with brown eyes as if they were equal and identical. Prima facie there is also no absurdity in treating all individuals, with their manifold differences, as

identical for other specific purposes of social organization which are wider and more intricate than that of preventing homicide.

Two other points should be noticed with regard to this controversy about equality. Mr. Mencken and those who think with him would be justified if they confined their objections to the fundamental democratic proposition and democrats themselves too often assume that that proposition is self-evident. A society in which the individual is treated as the social and political unit and in which everyone is treated as of equal social value will differ materially from a society in which birth and class determine a man's social position and political weight, and social and political value is held to depend upon the possession of personal qualities or upon social position and political weight. Historically before the eighteenth century all communities belonged to the latter type, during the nineteenth century the world has been passing through a transition stage in which an attempt has been made to transform the communities of this type into those of the democratic type. These attempts have everywhere been spasmodic and incomplete, and it is not yet possible anywhere to observe a fully democratic society in operation. The investigator of the habits of the human ant-heap who wishes to be impartial and arrive somewhere near the truth will, therefore, hesitate to dogmatize, whatever be his personal political inclinations. One whose inclinations are towards both democracy and the truth may perhaps tentatively put the case as follows. The non-democratic type of society has been tried in the world for several thousand years. It has produced various forms of semi-civilization. Its social form must always be pyramidal and hierarchical, and the

bottom of the social pyramid must always be sacrificed to the top. The civilization and quality, if not quantity, of human happiness are concentrated in the few classes and persons at the top where, too, must also be concentrated political power. The philosophical historian who looks at the upper part of each pyramid, and contemplates the different types of civilization which flourished there, will find much to admire. If one had known Pericles and listened to Socrates, Agathon, and Aristophanes at the symposium; if one had stood at the right hand of Augustus Caesar in the government of the Roman Empire; if one had been intimate with Lorenzo the Magnificent, or shared the conversation of Erasmus and More at Greenwich, or talked politics at Versailles with Colbert and Louis XIV.; then one might well have said: "What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving, how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension, how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! This is civilization, and we will have no innovations in our time." But there is always the broad base of the pyramid, the slave in Athens; the man tugging at the oar in the galley, or sweating on the Roman latifundia; the savage city rabble shouting for bread and the circus; the semi-human animals whom La Bruyère noticed in the fields of France. Surely it is not without significance that though the apex of civilization has changed from age to age and from race to race, the broad base remained the same, a broad base of misery and barbarism, so that the words in which a Gracchus described the population of Italy might have been used 2000 years later by La Bruyère to describe the population of France. Looking at the base of the

pyramid the democrat has ground for saying: "This is barbarism! Man and his civilization are the quintessence of dust."

The democrat, as we have seen, proposes to widen the base of civilization so that eventually the form of society may no longer be pyramidal. He proposes to treat each human being as a unit of equal social value. In the process of transition from the one form of society to the other, much will be lost both for individuals and for society itself. There will be a levelling down as well as a levelling up; the upper parts of the pyramid must lose something if the lower parts are to gain everything. It is open to argument that the gain will not equal the loss, for no one has yet seen a society really democratic, in which every member is treated as a social unit of equal value. But here the argument if not the hopes of those who oppose democracy have to be based ultimately on a profound social pessimism. There can only be one reason for believing *a priori* that a democratic type of society must be either impossible or hopelessly degraded, and that is if Nature has irrevocably fixed a very low limit to the possibilities of improving and civilizing human beings by breeding, education, and environment. The ancient aristocrats imagined that they had proved this to be the case by endlessly repeating as a self-evident truth the absurdly untrue statement that "human nature never changes"; in these modern, scientific days the aristocrat, unconscious that he is himself suffering from the democratization of science, relies upon a smattering of biology or physiology and their learned jargon and impressively declares that the nature of chromosomes or hormones conclusively proves the "incurable infantilism"¹ of the ordinary

¹ H. L. Mencken, *Notes on Democracy* 1927, p. 36.

man and so makes democracy impossible. What they call proof is really a chain of doubtful hypotheses, and practically the whole of this vast modern controversy about heredity and environment in relation to democracy is as nonsensical as the ancient controversy over "natural equality". During recent years the sciences of biology and embryology have made some very remarkable discoveries, but their interpretation is almost entirely hypothetical, and there is probably not one single new, ascertained fact with regard to heredity, which can be construed impartially as either favourable or unfavourable to the primary democratic position. Nothing that we learn from science about the influence of heredity and environment, or about the functioning of the human mind and body, authorizes us to say that it is possible or impossible, probable or improbable, that the physical, mental, and spiritual progress of the masses of a population can proceed to a point at which the quality and quantity of their civilization will, under a democratic form of government, exceed that of those aristocratic civilizations which have now vanished or decayed. All that one can do here is to trust oneself to the treacherous ground of hypothesis and generalization based on a study of human history. In that history, at any rate, it is difficult to find anything to bolster up the pessimism of those who do not like democracy. If the mass of the human race went forward one thousandth part of the distance that it has travelled since history began, when our forefathers were hardly as civilized or intelligent as are our dogs and cats to-day, the whole population would consist of Socrateses, Christs, Shakespeares, Newtons, and Beethovens, and our living supermen—the governing classes and statesmen and great industrialists—would be relatively in

the position of Mr. Mencken's ice-waggon driver. The aristocrat argues or assumes that such a step is impossible, and so it probably is for the masses as we know them, condemned *ex hypothesi* by the very nature and structure of non-democratic society—its dysgenics, its psychology, its politics, its economics, its religion, its houses, and its schools—to a kind of twilight existence between the animal and the human, still the same dreary life of labour, at best precariously poised between poverty and barbarism, with which the savage old God Jehovah was thought by a savage Hebrew tribe to have punished mankind for its first feeble effort after knowledge and civilization. Naturally, in an aristocratically organized society the base of the pyramid must consist mainly of 100 per cent morons; that is the inevitable result of the structure of such a society. The democrat proposes to alter that structure in order to reduce the number of morons. It is not legitimate for the opponent of democracy to retort that the alteration is impossible because a population of 100 per cent morons cannot work the machinery of a democratic society. Of course, they cannot; but the question is whether, if you abolish your social machinery for producing automata and savages, you may not find that the population contains a large enough number of intelligent people to work the machinery of a democracy.

Nobody knows, as I said, whether the transition is or is not possible. It may in the end prove impossible and the sins of aristocracy will be visited upon democracy for ever. But from what we know of history there is not the slightest reason to believe that it is impossible for the man in the street to become in a few hundred years as cultured and intelligent and politically sagacious as any member of the present

Cabinet or of any other Cabinet which has controlled our destinies in the last 200 years. What we have done with our pigs by breeding and environment we ought to be able also to do with our politicians.¹

It should be noted, however, that both democrats and their opponents often wrongly confuse the primary democratic thesis with secondary beliefs, and so add to the muddle about democratic equality. The primary democratic thesis is, as I have already perhaps repeated too often, that society and the State ought to treat everyone as social and political units of equal value. Nearly all democrats have also held that every unit, *i.e.* each individual, should be given equal political power. But that is a corollary, or secondary political belief, which may or may not follow from the original thesis. There may be a very large number of different ways of giving practical effect to the democratic doctrine of equality that individuals should be treated as equal social and political units, and the device of "one man, one vote" is only one among those many different methods. Unfortunately this is too often forgotten, and universal suffrage is regarded as the essence of democracy. Democrats have often imagined that its establishment would mean the immediate establishment of democracy, and their apologetic disillusionment, to which we have already referred, is largely due to their discovering that the means are not the same as the ends, and that by increasing the number of voters you do not necessarily even increase the number of democrats. On the other hand, opponents of democracy usually assumed that the failure of large numbers of voters to use their votes intelligently is a conclusive argument against the democratic doctrine of

¹ The relation between heredity, educability, and democracy will require further investigation at a later stage in this book.

equality, confirms their conviction that dustmen are really by a law of God and nature different from dukes, and proves the folly of attempting to treat every individual as of equal social value. But this is a subject to which we shall probably have to return when we consider the different ways which have been tried of putting into practice the ideals and theories of democracy.

Before we leave the subject of democratic equality, one last point requires to be mentioned. The transition period through which the world has been passing during the last century has already revealed a strange paradox which seems to attach itself to democratic communities. We have seen that the democratic idea of equality sprang from a new consciousness of individuality. Everyone, says the democrat, should be treated primarily as an individual and hence as a unit of equal social value. It might have been expected, therefore, that the democratization of a community would have led to an increase and liberation of individuality. This has certainly not been the case with the hybrid communities of the transition period. On the contrary and paradoxically, the democratization of any part of the life of these communities has seemed to many almost invariably to be accompanied by a dying down or suppression of individuality. Where democracy has appeared, there has followed immediately standardization. Everyone wears the same clothes, lives in the same kind of house, reads the same books, spends his evening in the same way. Large-scale industry standardizes not only its products and every part of each manufactured article but the lives of the producers. The great newspaper proprietors standardize their opinions. The State, by its great social services, is beginning to regiment and standardize us in the womb

DEMOCRACY

and the cradle, in school and college, in our homes, in sickness and health, in employment and unemployment, in widowhood and old age, and finally into our graves. A little reflection will show that this process is almost inevitable, at any rate in the transition stage towards democracy. The uniformity of life and mind which has spread over the United States of America is a direct result of the individual being treated as an equal unit in society. A community in which the base of the pyramid has been levelled up and the apex levelled down will naturally present a more uniform appearance of culture than one in which the differences between classes are very great.

The greater uniformity in democratic communities is a real thing, but it is not quite the same thing as a suppression of individuality. In the aristocratic societies of the past there were enormous differences between the classes, but it is doubtful whether within each class there was any more room for free development of individuality than there is to-day. In the upper classes the opportunity was there, but there is not much evidence that the eighteenth-century aristocracy, for instance, was really much more individualized than twentieth-century democracy. The gulf between Lord Chesterfield or Squire Western and an artisan or agricultural labourer was far greater than any social gulf to-day, but there were tens of Lord Chesterfields and hundreds of Squire Westons, all thinking, saying, and doing precisely the same things. These people had the standardized culture or pretentious barbarism of their class, imposed upon them from birth by rigid class convention. The lower classes were standardized by poverty, overwork, and ignorance. The "animaux farouches" whom La Bruyère noticed in the fields of France—"des mâles et des femelles, répandus par la campagne, noirs,

livides, et tout brûlés de soleil, attachés à la terre qu'ils fouillent et qu'ils remuent avec une opiniâtreté invincible"—had "une voix articulée" and, when they stood on their hind legs, human faces. "En effet", as he says, "ils sont des hommes", and in fact they formed the great majority of the population of France. Nay, this kind of savage animal formed the great majority of the population of Europe. Its kindred species in the towns, the terrifying creatures who swarmed out of the London slums to make the Gordon Riots and the Paris mob of the Terror, whose culture was the product of the *ancien régime*, not of democracy, had the same characteristics of uniform barbarism adjusted to urban life. It is only political prejudice or romantic sentimentality which can induce a man to believe that people living in these conditions had greater scope for individuality and were more highly individualized than the agricultural labourer, the town worker, the typist, and the shop-assistant, who to-day are, no doubt, standardized by universal education, the *Daily Mail*, the cinema, and the wireless.

We need not be much disturbed by the lamentations of conservatives who always see the Golden Age in the past, and usually in that period of the past contemporaneous with the lives of their grandmothers or great-grandmothers. There is certainly more scope for individuality and people are more highly individualized to-day than they have ever been in the world's history. The superficial uniformity of a semi-democratic community must not be mistaken for a loss of individuality, or for loss of colour and variety in the individual life. Democracy, if it is to succeed, will necessarily bring with it a type of civilization quite different from those of the aristocratic past. Instead of culture and civilization being

DEMOCRACY

confined to small, segregated classes, it will be spread evenly through the whole community, and this will probably always make a democratic society appear on the surface more uniform than other types. A culture of large masses, too, must itself differ from that of small groups and classes. The problem of providing for the cultural needs of immense numbers of civilized persons is a new one and presents many difficulties, but it would be ridiculous to indulge in premature rejoicing or despair. The cinema, popular literature, the B.B.C., and the "spoiling of the country-side" are all phenomena in which the transition from aristocratic to democratic culture can be studied. But it is only the transition; it is impossible to-day to tell what forms civilization may take in a fully established democracy. Contemporary culture is the culture of masses just emerging from the barbarism to which they were condemned by aristocracy.¹

Nevertheless, it would be wrong to ignore the dangerous symptoms of uniformity and standardization which have appeared as a universal accompaniment to democratic psychology and institutions. The herd instinct is still so strong in human beings that they will always behave like sheep if they are given the opportunity. Democracy and the industrialization which has accompanied it give enormous opportunities for the production of the sheep-like mind. Mass education, mass government, mass production encourage material and mental uniformity, and the scale of social life becomes so large that the individual seems lost and helpless. His life is ceaselessly moulded and manipulated in the vast machinery of the demo-

¹ De Tocqueville remarked a hundred years ago that "le peuple est plus grossier dans les pays aristocratiques que partout ailleurs" (*Démocratie en Amérique*, vol. i.).

cratic State and the complicated machinery of the modern industrial and economic system. The weight of public opinion, blown up by perpetual propaganda and by the Press, which has developed into a large-scale industry, becomes so enormous that it is difficult for anyone to resist it. "Liberty", said Pericles, describing what he thought to be Athenian democracy, "is the principle of our public life, and in our every-day life we are not mutually suspicious or angry with our neighbour because he pleases himself, nor do we look upon him with that kind of disapproval which, though harmless, is annoying." The words describe admirably a democratic psychology which gives free play to individuality and individual liberty. It is a psychology which cannot be said to be characteristic of the modern democracies in which the State is too often a menace to individual liberty and the man who pleases or thinks for himself is the object of suspicion and anger. But here, as the very words we are using show, the discussion, which began with equality, has insensibly led us to the third and most elusive member of the democratic Trinity—liberty.

DEMOCRACY AND LIBERTY

The idea of liberty in early democratic psychology is closely connected with the ideas of happiness and equality. The liberty which we are now considering has, of course, nothing to do with metaphysics and freedom of the will, it is political and civil liberty, a relationship, not between the individual and God or between mind and matter, but between the individual and other members of society. A man is free in so far as he is able to do what he wants or wills to do without interference from the rest of society, and in particular from that part of society which is called

"the Government". "A freeman", says Hobbes, "is he, that, in those things, which by his strength and wit he is able to do, is not hindred to doe what he has a will to."¹ And Montesquieu, looking at the government rather than the individual, adds the last little logical straw which in later times has often converted the democrat into the anarchist: "Dans un état libre, tout homme qui est censé avoir une âme libre, doit être gouverné par lui-même".²

"The free man must be governed by himself." Scratch but the surface of the political thought of the eighteenth century and everywhere you immediately come upon this pre-occupation with the newly discovered sense of individuality. To be governed by oneself is to be governed by one's own personality, and for Montesquieu only those are politically free who can follow without interference the paths which their own individuality tells them to follow. Indeed, in the modern mind the idea of liberty is so bound up with the sense of individuality that it is impossible to define the one except in terms of the other. Thus in the most recent book which I have read on the subject, *Liberty in the Modern State*, by Harold J. Laski (1930), the author writes: "I mean by liberty the absence of restraint upon the existence of those social conditions which, in modern civilization, are the necessary guarantees of individual happiness". And later on Professor Laski says: "Now freedom exists in a state where a man knows that the decisions made by the ultimate authority do not invade his personality". Professor Laski and Montesquieu, it will be seen, live in the same psychological world; to them every man is a person who is not free unless he can be assured against political "invasions of his person-

¹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Part II. chapter xxi.

² *De l'esprit des lois*, Book II. chapter vi.

ality". But it is a psychological world which did not exist before the sixteenth century; the French aristocrat, with his intimations of anarchy, would have understood the socialist Professor of Political Science in the University of London, but it is difficult to think of anyone born before 1650, except perhaps Montaigne, who would have understood Montesquieu. You can see the difference between the two worlds in Burke, hopelessly struggling to make history go backwards and to revive a dead psychology by the breath of sublime rhetoric. A man who maintains that liberty "is an entailed inheritance" has no contact with a world in which people feel that a free man in a free State ought to be governed by himself, or that politically everyone should be considered as a man or individual and nothing more, or that the free man in a free State must know that the decisions of the ultimate authority do not invade his personality. The idea that liberty is an entailed inheritance belongs to a world of political and social compartments, of classes and privileges, in which a man is not an individual, but the member of a class, the son of a father, the material manifestation of a political type or social "humour". The course of his life is continually shaped by the iron framework of rights which can only be acquired by purchase or inheritance; his right to shape it according to the dictates of his own personality is not recognized.

The modern notion of liberty, which is democratic in origin, springs, therefore, from the same stratum in communal psychology which gave the world the democratic conceptions of happiness and equality. Indeed, the three notions are so intimately connected in political psychology that they are little more than three different facets of the same psychological attitude. If socially and politically everyone is to be

treated merely as an individual, "as a man and nothing more", from one point of view it will be necessary to establish the right of each to pursue happiness, from another the right of each to be counted as an equal social and political unit, and from another the right of each to shape his life without interference according to the dictates of his own personality or individuality, *i.e.* to be free.

The origin of the democratic idea of liberty is clear and originally its meaning is simple. As soon as an attempt is made to translate the idea into practice, complexities begin, and of all the political blessings promised us by democracy freedom has proved to be the most elusive. The difficulty of ensuring individual freedom in human society and the strange vicissitudes that have befallen Europeans since 1789 in their struggle for liberty and democracy were certainly not foreseen by the early democrats. The problem for them was circumscribed by history and therefore comparatively simple. Naturally they only saw the world they lived in, and to that they adapted their communal psychology and so their political ideas and ideals. That world was the world of classes, inheritable and purchasable rights and privileges, which I have described and analysed above. Their freedom was, like nearly everything else, an entailed inheritance. Your position as an individual, with regard to freedom, depended upon whether you had inherited or purchased any amount of that commodity, and if so, how much and what kind. On the answer to those questions depended your political status—whether in fact you belonged to the ruling or to the ruled classes.

Finding themselves in a world so ordered, the early democrats saw the problem as a simple one in terms of political power and authority. If, they

argued, everyone is to be recognized socially as an individual, with the right to pursue his own happiness, to be counted as a political and social unit of equal value, to live his life without interference on lines traced for him by his own personality, then political power and authority must be exercised by the whole community. The possession of political power and authority ensures the power to draw the lines of life both for the possessors and the non-possessors and ensures control of the chief sources of happiness. No man is free, therefore, who does not share with the rest of the community in such power, authority, and control. The solution of the problem is to abolish all those rights and privileges to exercise political power which are inheritable or purchasable, and so to regulate society that they are vested in the community.

It was in this way that for the early democrats the problem of liberty became the problem of abolishing privileges. The task which they saw before them was legal and political, to make freedom the right of all rather than the prerogative of a few. The existing structure of society, with its two different types of prerogative, produced the two different currents in democratic thought and in the subsequent history of democracy, which are connected with the famous distinction between political and civil liberties. The nascent individualist under the *ancien régime* felt that his personality was illegitimately invaded by society in two ways. Political power was, as we have seen, a class prerogative inherited or purchased. Those who had not inherited or purchased such power—and they formed everywhere the vast majority of the population—were without say or influence in determining the general regulations of the society in which they lived. They were politically a ruled class in

marked distinction to the ruling class. The lines of their individual lives between birth and death were determined for them by the ruling class in every way in which the contour of an individual life can be affected by law with the State's power behind it.

To the democrat, the nascent individualist, such a condition of affairs was both irrational and unjust. He faced the intricate problem of political authority and political freedom and found the solution to be comparatively simple. The right to make the general regulations called laws and the right to exercise political authority should, he thought, no longer be an inheritable or purchasable privilege, a kind of private property belonging to kings, aristocrats, or small classes. Here, if anywhere, the principle that every man should be treated as an equal political and social unit should be operative. If everyone had an equal voice in determining the law, everyone would be politically free.

The founders of democracy in America were, as we have seen, almost entirely concerned with this general framework of political liberty, and the Declaration of Independence does not specifically recognize any other variety. But in Europe, and particularly in France, under the system of privilege and the political and social institutions of the *ancien régime* the ordinary man found that his personality might be continually invaded from another direction. The law itself was arbitrary and erratic and arbitrarily and erratically administered. If you belonged to one class, the laws themselves might not touch you; if to another, the laws might give you no protection, in person or property, against a privileged individual. It depended upon your class and your privileges, whether you might be arrested and imprisoned, and by whom; whether

you might beat or be beaten with impunity; whether your property could or could not be taken from you by the king and his servants; whether you might or might not form associations with those of your own class or occupation. Thought, opinion, and belief were all subject to a system of privilege. Those in authority determined what thoughts you might think, what opinions you might express, and what God you might worship in what way; and since authority was an apauage of class, whether a particular opinion was legal or illegal, or whether a particular form of religion or idolatry was encouraged or persecuted, depended upon privilege.

In all these different ways, a man's personality might be invaded under the *ancien régime*. The inroads were authorized by the political structure of society, so that to the early democrats the problem of ensuring civil liberty, of protecting the individual from such inroads upon his personality by privileged authority, presented itself as a problem of determining and regularizing certain fundamental relations between the individual and political authority. Civil liberty would, they thought, be secured for the individual, if he were given certain rights against authority, most of which are most easily defined as limitations upon political and legal authority. These fundamental limitations of primitive democracy, the seed-ground of so much that is characteristic in the psychology of nineteenth-century Liberalism, may be studied with advantage in the *Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen*. Liberty, said the French democrat, consists in the right to do what you will provided that it does not interfere with the right of others to do the same. Here we have the modern testament of individuality. The limitations on a man's right to liberty are the right of other men

to the same liberty and can only be determined by law (Article IV.). The Authority of the law should therefore itself be limited to the function of forbidding actions harmful to society; and everyone has the right to do anything which the law does not forbid him to do, while no one can be compelled to do anything which the law does not order him to do (Article V.). Here we have the First Commandment of democracy with regard to civil liberties, which established the democratic system of the same law for everyone and abolished the right or privilege of aristocrats and others to stand outside "the law of the land".¹ Article VII. establishes the legal right of not being subjected to trial, arrest, or imprisonment except by process of law; Article VIII., a limitation on the power of authority with regard to pains and penalties; Article IX. the right of the individual to be presumed innocent until he has been legally proved to be guilty; Article X. the right of the individual to freedom of opinion, Article XI. to freedom of speech and the Press.

The communal psychology which produced the democratic conception of liberty was thus largely composed of two different strands of political thought and feeling. There was the new sense of individuality inevitably breaking through into the domains of law and politics, and seeking to remould legal, political, and social institutions so that they should not hamper any man in following through life the course set for him by his own personality. On the other hand, there was the reaction against the existing political system which made political power a class monopoly. The first was mainly responsible for producing the doctrines of civil liberty, the second those of political democracy. What the-

¹ See p. 190.

early democrats did not see, and what the next century was to learn to its cost, is that the two strands of thought are not really woven of the same political ideas and ideals; they are not necessarily consistent; and in practice, therefore, which is merely a name for the process by which men's beliefs and desires solidify in action and become materialized as history, political democracy is not inevitably accompanied by civil liberty. The idea of civil liberties springs direct from the very core of individualism, the conviction that, as far as possible, everyone should be allowed and encouraged to live his own life in his own way without interference in human society. Political democracy also sprang, as we have seen, from the consciousness of individuality, but its psychology does not come from the very core and centre of individualism. Civil liberties aim at the protection of the individual against authority; political democracy aims at the just and rational organization of authority in human society. One has only thus to state the aims in general terms to see that the elements of divergence and discord are already there. The democrat proposed to substitute the community of individuals for small classes of privileged persons as the seat of authority in the State. He was concerned to make the individual rather than the class or privileged person the political unit, and even his civil liberties were usually thought of by him as a protection of the individual against privilege rather than against authority. Not having the experience of the nineteenth century behind him, he rarely, and then dimly, saw that individuality might require as much protection against a community of individuals as against a privileged class. From the psychology of political democracy there grew the idea of the

modern State, in practice perhaps the most powerful engine for the suppression of individualism that has ever been forged by the human mind. The psychology of pure individualism, latent in the idea of civil liberty, has never been applied by the democrat to the problem of organizing political power in the community, for, if applied, we should have the practice and doctrines not of democracy but of anarchism.

It took a considerable time before the fact became apparent that a political community of individuals, *i.e.* a community in which every man is treated as an equal political unit, may prove a terrible enemy to individual liberty, to the "right of every man to think and act as he likes". Indeed, during the century which followed the French Revolution, to many supporters and defenders of democracy the chief danger, in England at any rate, seemed to threaten from the opposite direction. For the student of political history and psychology there are few documents more curious and interesting than the essays and lectures of Matthew Arnold in the period between 1860 and 1880. It requires an effort to do justice to Matthew Arnold's mind, for it was one of the most characteristic products of the mid-Victorian era. His political views are best studied in *Culture and Anarchy* and the essays on Democracy and Equality in *Mixed Essays*. He sees himself as a crusader in the cause of culture or "sweetness and light" against Philistinism and English Liberalism. It was the *Zeitgeist*, breathing heavily over Britain, which embodied itself in the Philistine and the Puritan or Nonconformist, so hateful to him, yet he is completely unaware that the priggery of his own mind and the nasal sermonizing of his essays, so hateful to us, are products of the same unholy spirit breathing through him. The Pharisee is

full brother to the Philistine, and not even a fig leaf divides the Phariseism of Matthew Arnold from the Philistinism of his contemporaries. That is why the tone and rhythm, even the style, of his essay on "Sweetness and Light", are so like those of a good Nonconformist sermon.

The history of politics is the history of psychology, and part of the history of democracy can be studied in the psychology of Matthew Arnold. The acumen and innocent inconsistency of mind which he shows in his attitude towards culture were naturally no less strong in him when he thought about politics, and can be seen just as clearly in his attitude towards democracy. In England round about 1860 the *Zeitgeist* was still breathing heavily in favour of democracy, and Matthew Arnold was a firm believer in democracy. Within limits, the first two essays in his *Mixed Essays* are admirable and lucid statements of the democratic faith, and particularly of the vital importance of equality in the organization of society. Matthew Arnold was a democrat, because he had accepted the beliefs and desires of democracy with regard to equality. But when it came to a question of happiness or liberty, it is extremely doubtful whether his psychology was democratic. He agreed with the majority of his contemporaries in thinking that the most important thing was not to be happy, but good; and he only differed from them by identifying goodness with culture rather than with riches. But it is with his views on liberty that I am here more immediately concerned. The great danger which he saw in democracy, as practised and preached, by contemporary Liberals, was that it resulted in "every man doing what he likes". Like so many other respectable people, he was shocked and frightened by the exploits of Mr. Beales and the fall of the Hyde

Park railings before a London crowd in 1866. It threw him on the side of "authority", and he is never tired of castigating, in his scornful and superior way, those who thought that it was a good thing that society should be politically organized in such a way that people were allowed, as far as possible, to do what they liked. His answer to the individualists was to point out what appalling things people in fact liked to do. Given the state of mind and culture in England in the middle of the nineteenth century, the answer was, up to a point, effective; indeed, up to this point the answer would probably always be effective against political individualism in any age. There has never yet been an age in which large numbers of the population of any country have reached a high level of civilization, and it would therefore always be possible to point out that what most people liked doing was stupid, boring, brutal, or uncivilized.

It is extremely interesting to study Matthew Arnold's mind on this question, to observe how he proposes to retain what he believes to be democracy and yet prevent people from doing what they like, for it helps one both to understand the fundamental things in democratic psychology and to see how, round about 1860, the winds of communal psychology were already beginning to blow in a new direction, the direction of the authoritarian, "democratic" Great State. Matthew Arnold urges his contemporaries to cure the evils of individualism by increasing the power of the State and extending the range of its operations and interference. Not being, as he himself repeats so often, a politician or professionally a political thinker, he does not put forward his proposals in any detail, nor does he explain very clearly what exactly he wants the State to do or how

exactly its action is to produce sweetness and light out of individuals so full of foulness and darkness as Philistines and Puritans, the Mr. Beales and the John Brights. But from his rather confused and scattered argument it is possible to piece together the various motives and reasons which were operating in his political psychology. In the first place, he wanted to strengthen the State for the simple reason that he was frightened by the prospect of the "lower classes" insisting that *they*, too, should be allowed to do what they liked and get what they wanted. In his essay on "Doing As One Likes" you can see how large the Hyde Park railings loomed in his political philosophy. He is all for authority and for the suppression of demonstrations even at the cost of bloodshed. Like all authoritarians, the most important characteristic which he sees in liberty is a "tendency to degenerate into anarchy". His remedy is to increase the power of authority, *i.e.* the State, or in other words to abolish liberty. The problem here raised by the Hyde Park railings and Matthew Arnold was again and again to confront democrats during the next fifty years; indeed, it remains to-day a fundamental problem for them and one may, perhaps, suggest that it is partly owing to their failure to solve it democratically that so many people have lost enthusiasm for democracy. At bottom the question raised by Mr. Beales and those whom Matthew Arnold could only see as London roughs was what is to be the position and what are to be the rights of those who want to alter the balance of political power, the organization of authority, or the constitution of society. How far are they to be allowed to use "civil liberties" for the furtherance of their ends, to what extent should they be allowed to do what they like and say what they like? In effect, Matthew Arnold's answer is that civil

liberties should be denied them and that they should not be allowed to do and say what they like, because they are endangering "law and order". The community should act against them and the authority of the State suppress this dangerous individualism. Matthew Arnold thought that he was a voice crying in the wilderness, but democracy, if it did not listen to the voice, at any rate adopted its arguments and procedure. The State, in the name of democracy, has again and again done what he recommended, and it is doing it to-day with the latest heresy, communism.

In the second place, Matthew Arnold wished to increase the power and range of State action, because he believed that in many matters, like education, the State's resources and authority and the organized effort made possible by its action would produce far better results than individual initiative. In this he was ahead of his time; his view has since become a commonplace, and its wide acceptance has led to an enormous extension in the State's control of social organization. It is, however, interesting and important to observe that Matthew Arnold, like so many other admirers of the State, discovered not only a utilitarian, but also a mystical justification for increasing its power and range at the cost of individual initiative. Everyone, according to him, has "a better (or best) self". Mr. Beales, John Bright, the London rough, the Protestant dissenter, all these people individually like the most appalling things and want to do them. Even if you regard them in the aggregate as classes, they are incredibly degraded—for instance, the Liberal non-conformist is a class "imperfectly civilized and impossible, a class ill-educated as the Irish middle class itself, knowing how to make money, but not knowing how to live when they have made it; and in short,

of the powers which, as we saw when we were discussing Equality, go to constitute civilization—the powers of conduct, intellect, beauty, manners—laying hold upon one only, the power of conduct”.¹ And yet everyone of these appalling people has a best self, which, by some mystic miracle is the same in all and wanting to do the same things, the good things, the very things which culture and Mr. Matthew Arnold want it to do. And so

. . . by our *best self* we are united, impersonal, at harmony. We are in no peril from giving authority to this, because it is the truest friend we all of us can have; and when anarchy is a danger to us, to this authority we may turn with sure trust. Well, and this is the very self which culture, or the study of perfection, seeks to develop in us; at the expense of our old untransformed self, taking pleasure only in doing what it likes or is used to do, and exposing us to the risk of clashing with everyone else who is doing the same! So that our poor culture, which is flouted as so unpractical, leads us to the very ideas capable of meeting the great want of our embarrassed times! We want an authority, and we find nothing but jealous classes, checks, and a deadlock; culture suggests the idea of *the State*. We find no basis for a firm State-power in our ordinary selves; culture suggests one to us in our best self.²

This, it will be seen, is political mysticism. There is no reason, outside Matthew Arnold’s unsupported faith and word for it, to believe that everyone has a best self which really wants what his individual self does not want, and does not want what his individual self wants. Still less reason is there for believing that the State, composed of these abominable individual selves nearly all wanting bad things, will, merely because it is entrusted with authority to

¹ Matthew Arnold, *Mixed Essays, Irish Catholicism, and British Liberalism*.

² Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, chapter ii.

compel people to do what they do not want to do, act on behalf of the best self and compel them to do what is good. The authority of the State is not mystic and does not, unfortunately, follow the laws of well-intentioned political mysticism; its nature is hard and earthy; it has to be exercised through the hands of individual selves, not best selves, and there is good reason for believing *a priori*, and still better reason for believing *a posteriori*, that the authority of the State will be frequently used for compelling everyone to do what the individual selves of those who control it want them to do.

This political mysticism with regard to the State, which can be observed taking a somewhat inchoate and naïve form in the mind of Matthew Arnold, introduces us to a new complex of ideas in communal psychology which has greatly developed since his day and deeply affected democracy and human history. Though often accepted by democrats and put forward as a kind of political religion in the name of democracy, it is really inconsistent with the psychology from which democracy originally sprang, and therefore with the ideals and practice of democracy. Democracy originated in individualism and the consciousness of individuality. That is why it pressed the political and social claims of the individual as against heredity, rank, class, and privilege. As a means to its end, it proposed a political mechanism in which the political and social unit was the individual, assured of power to live his own life in his own way by those fundamental legal rights which were given the name of civil liberties. The democratic ideal was a community of politically equal individuals, each enjoying the maximum amount of individual liberty. Democratic psychology, therefore, embraced certain beliefs, and, if

these beliefs have been or can be proved to be untrue, democracy in practice must be impossible or would require to be modified or diluted. In the first place democracy originally implied the belief that a society in which political power and authority is vested in the whole community of politically equal individuals will be happier and more civilized, and will govern its affairs more justly and rationally than any other. In the second place, it implied the belief that a community in which individuals are, as far as possible, free to say and do what they want will be happier and more civilized and more "progressive" than a society in which their actions are dictated or proscribed by political authority.

It is obvious that in whatever terms democratic psychology is described or democratic beliefs stated, one sees that they must recognize and proclaim a compromise between authority and individual liberty. The question then is on what principles the compromise should be made. All democrats have held that democratic society should use law and authority to curtail individual liberty where the individual's action obviously infringes the liberty of others or is obviously harmful to society or "anti-social". It is also consistent with democratic psychology to hold that where the social advantages are very great, the community itself or the State should organize and control large and important fields of human activity, such as education, transport, communications. Such communal organization carries with it compulsion and the curtailment of individual initiative, but may yet increase the sum of individual liberty. It is not true, as many extreme defenders of *laissez-faire* seem to believe, that more people are able to do what they want in a country where the railways are the monopolies of private companies,

or the village school controlled by the Church, than in one where the railways are in the hands of the State and the schools are State schools. Modern civilization is so complicated that it could not exist at all without a continual compromise between authority and liberty. On the other hand, politics and the shape and flavour of society are determined by psychology, and the shape and flavour of modern society will be more or less democratic in proportion as the psychology of the individuals who compose it are more or less democratic. Psychology ceases to be democratic when, faced with this perpetual necessity to compromise between authority and individual liberty, its bias is towards the authority rather than the liberty.

The democratic attitude towards liberty and authority is in fact the exact opposite of Matthew Arnold's. The democrat believes that there is a real cultural value in individuality and individual freedom, that a society in which people do what they want may not be civilized, but that a society in which people cannot do what they want cannot be civilized. He holds that a society composed of individuals whose lives, actions, beliefs, ideals, and tastes are regulated for them by authority, even when they are acquiescent and the authority directs them towards sweetness and light, has far less hope of attaining civilization than a society composed of individuals who, acutely conscious of their individuality, are left free, as far as possible, from authority to form their own individual beliefs, ideals, and tastes, so that they not only can do what they like but can actively like what they do. Authority for the democrat cannot have anything magic or mystic in it; at best it is but a convenience, part of the machinery of civilization, like a water-closet or an electric power-station, which

are under modern conditions necessities if the individual is to live a civilized life, but whose functions are best performed when they work so silently and so far in the background that they never appear to obtrude themselves on the individual's life.

In the communal psychology of democracy the State should therefore be regarded, from the point of view of civilization, as on the same level as a drainage system or a power-station. It has no more connection with our best selves than has a sewage farm, and it is reasonable to expect just as little and just as much sweetness and light in the State as in a water-closet. The State, according to the democrat, is a social organization and the seat of authority; it will have the same amount of culture and reason as have the individuals who compose or control it. If organized irrationally and unfairly, as it is when authority is given to privileged classes and persons, justice and reason will have little effect upon the organization of society or the decision of political questions; but if it is organized on democratic lines, the bias will be in favour of justice and reason when political questions have to be decided.

To this democratic conception of society the new complex of ideas in communal psychology which we have observed appearing embryonically in the mind of Matthew Arnold, but which since his day has assumed all kinds of strange and monstrous forms of growth, is completely opposed. Probably because it has taken so many different forms, to each of which has been given a distinctive name, this new political and communal psychology, unlike democracy, has no name of its own. For convenience I propose to call it neo-authoritarianism. Neo-authoritarianism can be observed as the most active element in the communal psychology of the modern democratic

state, of modern patriotism, nationalism, imperialism. It has permeated the whole of socialism and the different sects of socialists; it has given new foundations to conservatism; it is part of the inspiration of communism; it is the whole theory and practice of fascism. Like all active and creative factors in communal psychology, it exists primarily as a mental attitude and only secondarily condenses into political beliefs, a social philosophy, or an economic formula. The democratic attitude was individualist, humanistic, humanitarian, atheist or agnostic, idealistic but rationalistic, pacific; the neo-authoritarian is instinctively searching for an antidote to individualism which he dislikes, to humanism and humanitarianism which he despises, and to reason which he fears; he is mystic, religious, and bellicose. Neo-authoritarianism is very largely a reaction against democracy and the forms of its condensations have been naturally determined by the development of democratic psychology and its political and social effects during the first half of the nineteenth century.

In all its forms the reaction is distinguished by a deification of authority, a religion and worship of authority. The new authoritarianism differs from the old, because the authority thus deified is not that of a privileged person, persons, or class, but the authority of an abstraction, the organized authority of a personified community. Where the democrat regarded the State and all communal groupings as mere social machinery, means to an end—the end being the freedom and happiness of the individual, the neo-authoritarian regards the State or communal grouping as an end in itself, something mystically greater and better than the individuals which compose it. The State, the nation, one's country, society, communism, fascism are not regarded by modern

politicians, nationalists, patriots, socialists, communists, or fascists as performing useful functions analogous to those of the currency system, power-stations, and water-closets; they occupy the position and perform the functions previously occupied and performed by Moloch, Jehovah, Jesus Christ, Buddha, and Muhammad. They are gods to be worshipped and obeyed. Like gods, they are all-powerful and all-wise. Matthew Arnold, as we have seen, already had begun to believe that the State must be wiser and more civilized than the individuals of whom the State is composed, and whereas this attitude was rare in 1850, it is to-day almost universal among conservatives and socialists. The dogmas of Marxian socialism, of communism, and fascism are accepted by believers as absolute and religious truths, determined somehow or other by some mystic, communal authority, much in the way in which the truths of Christianity were determined by the authority of God or of the Church. The authority of these communal, social, and political deities is therefore something good in itself; submission to the "will" of the State or nation or communism or fascism is as meritorious as used to be submission to the Will of God. To sacrifice individual life and happiness to the capitalist, nationalist, communist, or fascist State, as the case may be, is to-day considered to be as absolute a duty as in former times it was a duty to sacrifice them to the particular God and religion which claimed one's allegiance.

The neo-authoritarian's attitude to the community which happens to claim *his* allegiance is, thus, mystic, irrational, religious. The community may be a State, a nation, or an empire, a communist or a fascist community, but he regards it and insists that others shall regard it as an object of reverence and

worship. Rational criticism of it is blasphemy and to resist its authority treason, a crime which ranks with that of Cain and is, in nearly all civilized countries, legally punishable with death. With this attitude individualism is inconsistent and antagonistic; indeed, one may suggest that the attitude itself is an unconscious attempt of the human mind to get rid of the new and disturbing consciousness of individuality which caused the psychological and social revolutions of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The idea that a man with a free spirit in a free State should be governed by himself and that it is desirable that men should have free spirits, the idea that it is better that people should do and think what they like, and the idea that one's personality should not be invaded by the decisions of the ultimate political authority find no sympathy with most modern conservatives or liberals, with patriots, nationalists, and imperialists, with socialists, communists, and fascists. Authority and obedience, not freedom and individuality, are what they instinctively feel to have political and social value. Nor do they regard authority and submission, often euphemistically called allegiance, merely as good in themselves; they consider them always to be the best means to rely upon for the proper ordering of human society. According to democracy, the less interference from authority with the individual's life the better will be the society and the individual; everyone is the best judge of what is good for him, and the more freedom that authority leaves to individual choice the greater the probability that the choice will be good. The democrat, in fact, is a rationalist and experimentalist who does not believe in the existence of any absolute political or social good, the secret of which is revealed to or in the hands of any particular classes or persons. The neo-

authoritarian, however, always believes that certain people or classes, or the State or authority or the community knows better what is good for the individual than he knows himself. And this belief is very often accompanied by a belief, bearing remarkable resemblance to older religious creeds, a belief in the existence of a kind of revealed political truth. These political truths are in the hands of "Chosen People" or classes who, naturally, are the right persons to be entrusted with authority or dictatorship and to determine what is or is not good for the individual or society.

A political psychologist, contemplating the history of the world during the last fifty or eighty years, must be struck by the immense importance of the communal psychology of neo-authoritarianism, and of its effect upon the development of democracy. But historians are so much occupied with recording events and tracing their causal connections that they often neglect to point out and explain to us very important things going on in the minds of human beings during those events. If you desire to know the details of the Manchurian campaign in the Russo-Japanese war or of the internecine squabbles of the Second International or of the rise and fall of real wages during the last half century, you will find them accurately recorded and brilliantly analysed and explained by admirable historians; I know of no history which even mentions this curious movement of the human mind which I have called neo-authoritarianism. In the previous pages I have only described it in general terms, but its importance to the communal psychology of the later nineteenth century is so great that I propose, before I leave the subject of democracy and liberty, to point out certain particular cases in which its growth, so antipathetic to the democratic

conceptions of individual liberty, can be clearly traced.

As soon as we began to analyse the psychology of democracy we found that it was not an isolated system of clear-cut, logical beliefs, but issued from a vast background or network of ideas and feelings which crystallized or condensed here into humanitarianism, there into utilitarianism, here into socialism, and there into democracy. This is also true of neo-authoritarianism. The psychological background or network is what I have described in general terms in the previous paragraphs; we shall now be looking at its crystallizations and condensations. Let us take, first, political psychology in a country like Britain or the United States where, it is commonly believed, an advanced type of democracy has developed. Here the psychology of modern patriotism is authoritarian and almost entirely antipathetic to the psychology in which democracy originated. British and American patriotism teaches that individual happiness must be subordinated to that of the community; but this community is not a community of individuals; it is a communal abstraction—"one's country". In practice, "one's country" is the State or even those who, at the moment, exercise authority in the State. For instance, in war or whenever the Government considers that the country or the State is in danger, it is held to be the duty of the patriot to put himself absolutely at the disposal of those in authority. If he does not do so voluntarily, the Government has the power and duty to compel him. Under such circumstances, for an individual to oppose or even criticise the Government is almost universally considered to be unpatriotic, and is often made illegal and punishable with fine or imprisonment. In this psychology of patriotism the idea of one's country—partly a com-

munal abstraction, partly a personification of one's physical "native land" and of its history and traditions—becomes inextricably confused with the State or machinery of authority and government. Thus thousands of Englishmen and Americans consider that criticism of the "Constitution" or of the organization of authority is sedition and should be suppressed by law, and that the man who attacks, not a political party, but the foundations of power or property, is unpatriotic and a "traitor".

Even this inadequate analysis of the political psychology of modern patriotism shows it to be a particular condensation of neo-authoritarianism and inconsistent with the democratic idea of liberty and happiness. The community is deified and worshipped as "one's country". The happiness of the individual, indeed under certain circumstances of all the individuals composing the community, must be sacrificed for "the good" of the community. Whenever it is possible to make an appeal to the patriotic instinct, the good patriot is expected and often required to feel, think, and act on the axiom: "My country, right or wrong!", and therefore when patriotism enters politics, reason and reasoned criticism have to leave by the same door. Patriotism thus emotionally takes the place of religion, being a mixture of faith, love, and worship. The analogy is even closer because, just as spiritual religion nearly always becomes encrusted in an organized Church, so spiritual patriotism is necessarily encrusted in the organized State. In both cases this leads to the same result: the claims of individuality yield to those of authority; merit is acquired by submission to authority, and an attempt to assert any right of individual judgment or individual freedom becomes a sin, if not a crime. And just as

in the case of religion, it is the material Church and the "individual selves" of those controlling it who necessarily usurp the place of God and claim the submission of the truly religious, so the State and those in power necessarily at any particular moment represent the country in the mind of the true patriot and claim his allegiance.

I am not criticizing patriotism, in which, as in most other things, there are probably elements that are both good and bad. I have tried to describe it as it appears to operate in political psychology of Britain and America to-day. I am concerned here only with its relation to the psychology of democracy, and with the fact that it is neo-authoritarian and inconsistent with that psychology. Particular examples show that in practice it does operate in this way. In times of crisis, when the psychology of patriotism completely gets the upper hand and dominates politics, individual liberty is abolished and the psychology of democracy, if it appears anywhere, is anathematized and penalized. That this should happen in time of war is considered inevitable, but the very fact that it is so considered is part of the neo-authoritarian psychology of patriotism. The submission of the individual to the authority of the State, his deprivation of the right to criticize or to express his opinion, the withholding from him of information by those in power, the suspension of democratic institutions, all these things are justified by the plea that the country is in danger. Under the circumstances, the plea is in some cases a true one; it is true, that is to say, that probably in every war the safety of the State requires the suspension of some democratic institutions and abnormal curtailment of individual liberty. But those who survived the great war, and can now look back in tran-

quillity and recall the state of their own minds and that of their fellow-countrymen's between 1914 and 1918, know that in war many things are done under the impulse of modern patriotism to suppress opinion and to restrict liberty which have nothing to do with the country's safety, and in fact are a hindrance to the efficient conduct of war. They are done partly because the spirit of modern patriotism is authoritarian and antagonistic to that of democracy, and partly because those in authority see that they can use the patriotic spirit to increase their own power and to suppress opposition.

The Great Strike even more than the Great War throws light upon this modern psychology of patriotism. The question of the legitimacy of a General Strike is not a simple matter for the true democrat, and will have to be considered at length later on in this book; here I am merely concerned with the way in which patriotism entered into an economic struggle which began in a difference of opinion between mine-owners and mine-workers. The difference of opinion was with regard to wages; the mine-owners wished to reduce the miners' wages; when the miners declined to accept the reduction, the mine-owners locked them out of the mines. The mine-owners refused all attempts at conciliation or compromise on the part of the Government. Eventually early in May, the General Council of the Trades Union Conference decided on a sympathetic general strike and over 4,000,000 workers ceased work. The General Council, from the first day of the strike, maintained that it was purely an industrial dispute, that the strike was "due to the Government's refusal to secure a withdrawal of the lock-out notices in the mining industry, and to its action in provocatively taking the side of the mine-owners and in

breaking off negotiations at a time when the General Council was sincerely seeking a peaceful settlement", that "it was ready at any moment to resume negotiations for an honourable settlement".¹ During the strike there was no violence or serious disorder or any sign that its objects were other than those stated by the Trade Unions. Yet the Government, practically all the leading Conservative and Liberal politicians, and nearly all the newspapers represented the strike as revolutionary, political, and unpatriotic. The stage was set for a war in which, if you were on the side of the mine-owners and Government, you were "for King and Country",² if on the side of the workers, you were on the side of "the enemy". Lord Balfour, the Conservative, maintained that the strike was an "attempted Revolution"; Sir John Simon, a Liberal and a lawyer, committed himself, at the opportune moment, to the statement—for which even a lawyer of his distinction found it impossible to construct a plausible argument—that the strike was illegal and unconstitutional. Mr. Rudyard Kipling, the unofficial poet laureate of imperialism, jingoism, and all the most strident forms of patriotism, broke into verse in Mr. Churchill's *Government Gazette* in a stanza significantly entitled "A Song of the English", in which apparently the supporters of the mine-owners and Government are identified with the English while the virtues of a patriotic Englishman are defined as law-abidingness, obedience, and a desire to "serve the Lord":

¹ See *The British Worker* for May 5 and 6, 1926.

² This was the title of the leading article which the twenty employees of *The Daily Mail* had refused to print, an action which the Government used as a pretext for breaking off negotiations. See, too, the cartoon, "Under which Flag?", in *The British Gazette* of May 12.

POLITICAL COMMUNAL PSYCHOLOGY

Keep ye the Law—be swift in all obedience—

Clear the land of evil, drive the road and bridge the ford.

Make ye sure to each his own

That he reap where he hath sown,

By the peace among Our Peoples let men know we serve the Lord.

I am not concerned here with the rights and wrongs of the different parties' (though my sympathies are upon the side of the miners and strikers), but with the communal psychology of the strike. In fact, I think that the strike was a mistake in policy, that the employees of the *Daily Mail* were wrong to refuse to print it, and that it was an error to suppress opinion by stopping newspapers. But the Government and those who mobilized all the forces of the modern State against the strikers immediately appealed to the psychology of patriotism to reinforce their policy, which was authoritarian, anti-libertarian, and anti-democratic. Practically no one to-day would or could maintain that the strike was revolutionary or in any ordinary sense of the words "directed against the Government". It was neither illegal nor unconstitutional. It is difficult to see why, in a democratic and free country, it should be more illegal, unconstitutional, or unpatriotic for the workers in a body to withdraw their labour from industry with an economic object than it is for the mine-owners in a body to lock the miners out of the mines with an economic object. It is not quite easy to understand why a few mine-owners should be considered law-abiding citizens and patriotic Englishmen—with a certificate of respectability and patriotism from the Sir John Simons and the Rudyard Kiplings—when they attempt to force a reduction of wages by locking hundreds of thousands of workers out of employment and so causing them

distress, while four million workers should be considered outcasts and enemies of society when they attempt to maintain wages by withdrawing their labour and so causing distress. It is not obvious why, in a just and equal, a free and democratic society, the forces of the State and the power of the Press should be used for weeks and months to maintain conditions in which the mine-owners can exercise without interference the economic pressure of a lock-out, while those forces should be mobilized in twenty-four hours against the workers who resort to the economic pressure of the strike.¹

And now, having analysed to some extent this psychology of the strike, let me try, as fairly as I can, to reconstruct it, for it is only in this way that its true connection with neo-authoritarian psychology will become clear. Before the strike, a large majority of people in England were, I think, "against the mine-owners", as it was called. That, despite this, the mine-owners were allowed by the Government and Press to continue the process of "starving the miners" into acceptance of their terms, was due to various different ingredients of communal psychology. The idea that the employee ought to be in an inferior and subservient position in his relations with the employer, though rarely admitted or expressed, is still deeply rooted in the psychology of all classes except that of the manual workers. It is closely connected with the psychology of the property owner. The employer is the property owner *in excelsis*, exercising one of the most sacred and fundamental rights of ownership. His is the mine, factory, business, fields, house; his is "the job". It is for him to

¹ For a much more detailed analysis of the communal psychology during the strike, see *The British Public and the General Strike*, by Kinsley Martin (1926).

offer or not to offer what is his own. And in offering the job, it is for him to state the conditions of the offer; the other man is the "applicant" and he has no rights other than that of accepting or refusing.

This has been the attitude of the mine-owners before, during, and since the strike; not only have they repeatedly protested against "political interference" with their industry and property, but they have also shown that their object is to break the power of the miners' organizations—in other words to prevent "interference" by the organized employees with the methods of controlling their property or with the conditions of employment offered by them. It is an attitude which in the confused communal psychology of to-day has, in theory, been abandoned by everyone except the most conservative employers and property owners. Its abandonment, in so far as it has been abandoned, is due to the growth of other forms of authoritarian psychology, *e.g.* collectivism and "Statism".¹ But, though abandoned in theory, in practice this attitude persists among the middle and property-owning classes, and is always operative politically when a larger question arises in which their own interests and those of labour are at variance. The mine-owners and some other employers, in the years after the war, were convinced, that a struggle with the trade unions was necessary in order to assert the right of the employer to deal with his own "property" in his own way and without interference from labour and its organizations, in other words to "put the worker back in his place". They had the sympathy of many conservative poli-

¹ The psychology of the property owner is itself a curious mixture. With regard to the rights of property owners and employers he is an individualist and even democrat, with regard to those of non-property owners and employees he is an authoritarian.

ticians, some back-benchers, and others of the type of Mr. Churchill. And this policy of forcing the miners to fight or surrender could be successfully pursued, because the mass of the middle classes, though they disapproved of the mine-owners' attitude, were not prepared to treat it as anti-social or unpatriotic. Thus, in the present condition of communal psychology, the organized mine-owners could rely upon the forces of the State being used to ensure them liberty of economic action not essentially different from that economic action against which all the forces of the State were to be used when it was resorted to by the organized workers against the organized employers.

How was this curious political conjuring trick performed? It was performed by an appeal to patriotism and to that latent economic psychology of the middle classes to which I have referred in the previous paragraph. When the mine-owners locked the men out of the mines, they were exerting economic pressure on the miners and their families, and the psychology of economic democracy requires that they shall have full liberty to exert such pressure. When the Trade Unions withdrew the labour of their members, they were exerting economic pressure on all employers and their families and on the mass of the middle classes, and the psychology of economic democracy, as understood by such persons as Mr. Churchill and Sir John Simon, requires that it shall be illegal and unconstitutional to exert such pressure. Mr. Churchill and Sir John Simon regarded the mine-owners as exerting pressure upon a particular section of a class, the miners, and upon a particular section of consumers, the users of coal; they ignored the fact that the resulting distress and discomfort in those classes might lead, and under such circum-

stances often has led to pressure being put upon the Government to intervene in the dispute. They held that such use of economic force by one class against another class is democratically legitimate. But they regarded the organized workers as exerting economic pressure, through the strike, upon the mass of the middle classes, and it is easy for the middle classes to identify themselves with "the community". So the strikers were attacking the "community" and the "nation". And just as in a national lock-out of miners, the resulting distress brings indirectly pressure upon the Government, so in a national strike—but more obviously and, it may be, effectively—pressure is exerted upon the Government to do what they otherwise might not do—indeed, if the strike is sufficiently effective, the Government will be forced to end it one way or another. So the strikers were attacking not only the "community" and the "nation", but the Government, Parliament, and the State. The appeal to patriotism immediately became possible, and the authoritarian psychology of patriotism instantly took charge of events. On the one side was King and Country, the nation and Mr. Churchill; on the other sedition, the "enemy", and Mr. J. H. Thomas. It was no longer a case of right or wrong; it was a case of defeating the "enemy", of imposing the "nation's" or the Government's will on him.¹

¹ The following are some pronouncements by the leading politicians made during the strike, which are worthy both of record and study:

Mr. Baldwin: "Constitutional Government is being attacked. . . . Stand behind the Government, who are doing their part, confident that you will co-operate in the measures they have undertaken to preserve the liberties and privileges of the people of these islands. The laws of England are the people's birthright. The laws are in your keeping. You have made Parliament their guard up. The General Strike is a challenge to Parliament and is the road to anarchy and ruin." *British Gazette* of May 6, 1926. Note on Constitutional Govern-

DEMOCRACY

The phenomenon known as a general strike raises, it will be seen, some fundamental questions for democracy. They cannot be solved by saying that

ment was not being attacked; (b) the curiously confused psychology, half authoritarian "Stand behind the Government", half democratic "the liberties and privileges of the people of these islands"; (c) the identification of the Government with the nation, see p. 297; (d) the failure to observe that the right to combine and the right to strike are part of "the liberties and privileges of the people of these islands" and of "the people's birthright", protected by the laws of England and democracy.)

Lord Oxford and Asquith: "There could be no greater misunderstanding of the attitude of our people at this moment than to suppose that it implies any hostility to the right of combination in industry. Strikes and lock-outs, though they always inflict a certain amount of inconvenience on the public, may be, and often are, in the last resort justifiable and even necessary. But the challenge which has now been thrown down and taken up is of a totally different kind. A General Strike, such as that which it is being sought to enforce, is directly aimed at the daily life of the whole community. . . . We should have lost all sense of self-respect if we were to allow any section of the community at its own will, and for whatever motives, to bring to a stand-still the industrial and social life of the whole nation. It would be to acquiesce in the substitution for Free Government of a Dictatorship. Thus the British people will never do."

Mr. Justice Astbury, giving judgment in the Chancery Division on Tuesday, May 11, 1926: "The so-called general strike called by the T.U.C. Committee is illegal and contrary to law, and those persons inciting or taking part in it are not protected by the Trades Disputes Act of 1906. No trade dispute has been alleged or shown to exist in any of the unions affected except in the miners' case, and no trade dispute does or can exist between the Trades Union Congress, on the one hand, and the Government and the nation on the other. The orders of the Trades Union Council are, therefore, unlawful, and the defendants are in law acting illegally in obeying them, and can be restrained by their own union from doing so." (Quoted from *The British Gazette* of May 12, 1926. It is certain that no one, with possibly the doubtful exception of Mr. Justice Astbury, realized before May 11, 1926, that this was the law of England and that for the workers' organizations to declare a sympathetic strike was illegal. Note the "judicial" assumption that the strike was against "the Government and the nation". We have always been proud of the impartiality of our judges.)

Sir John Simon, May 6: "This General Strike was not a strike at all. A strike was perfectly lawful. . . . The decision of the Council of the Trade Union Executive to call out everybody, regardless of the contracts of those workmen they called upon, was not a lawful act at all." On May 11: "The plain fact was that, not as a matter of narrow law,

a general strike is not a strike at all or by the appeal to passion through patriotism. In a fully democratic society, in which there existed not only political but economic liberty and equality, a general strike, or far more probably a strike in some key industry or industries, might be used by a minority to further its political or economic interests at the expense and against the will of the community. Such a strike (though it would still be a strike) would be undemocratic and unpatriotic, and might therefore reasonably be declared illegal. But in the General Strike of 1926 there was no attempt by a working class minority to impose its will upon the majority or to further its political or economic interests at the expense of the community. The State, by its Constitution, assured to the mine-owners,—a tiny minority—full economic liberty to exploit an economic monopoly, and gave them the power not only to combine in locking out the miners and imposing their will upon them, but also to further their own interests at the expense and against the will of the vast majority of the community. It shows the almost pathological condition of communal psychology at the present time that, when four million workers combined by withdrawing their labour to help the miners and resist the mine-owners, it was possible for a middle- and upper-class Government to prove that the mine-owners were on the side of the nation and of liberty and democracy, and that the workers' action was undemocratic, seditious, illegal, and unpatriotic. In effect the mine-owners successfully

but as a matter of fundamental constitutional principle, when once they had a proclamation of a general strike such as this, it was not, properly understood, a strike at all. A strike was a strike against employers to compel employers to do something. A general strike was a strike against the general public to make the public, Parliament, and the Government do something."

claimed all the advantages of democracy as property owners and successfully repudiated all the obligations of democracy as employers; the workers were expected to leave the advantages of democracy to the employers, and, as employees, to be content to accept only its obligations. The result was not a struggle in which "Constitutional Government was being attacked" or the democratic "liberties and privileges of the people of these islands" were in question, it was simply a class-war in which the economic forces of the middle classes, property owners, and employers, supported by those of the State, were pitted against the economic forces of the employed. The complete victory of the middle classes was due partly to the fact that they were in control of the State and its forces, and partly to the fact that they were thus able to represent the "country" and the "community" and the "nation", and so to appeal to the psychology of patriotism.

This view of the General Strike and of its psychology would, of course, not be accepted as accurate by those who opposed it, and it is therefore necessary, before leaving the subject, to place before the reader a representative statement of the "patriotic", middle-class view. It is possible to give such a statement, made not in the heat of the struggle by an active combatant, but by a reputable historian in the calm atmosphere of his study four years after the struggle was over. Though Mr. Justice Astbury and Sir John Simon had declared the General Strike to be illegal the Conservative Government in 1927 thought it necessary to pass the Trade Disputes and Trade Union Act in order to make general and sympathetic strikes illegal. This Act "declared a strike to be illegal if its object went beyond the furtherance of a dispute within a trade or industry in which the

strikers were engaged, or was designed to coerce the Government, and similar provisions" were enacted with regard to a lock-out". At the end of 1930 the Labour Government introduced a Bill to amend the Act of 1927 by declaring "that a strike or lock-out is only illegal if its primary object is an object other than that of furthering purposes connected with the conditions of labour of any person whether or not employed in the trade or industry in which the strike or lock-out takes place; and further, no person is deemed to have committed any offence either under the section or at Common Law until the strike or lock-out has been declared by the High Court to be illegal".¹ In *The Times* of December 30, 1930, there appeared a letter by Sir John Fortescue, the historian, stating clearly the view of those middle-class persons who opposed the General Strike and consider that all general and sympathetic strikes should be made illegal. I propose to quote the relevant passages in full:

Does not the title "Challenging the State" of your article on the proposed repeal of the Trade Disputes Act understate the case? What was in essence the general strike of 1926? It was a deliberate attempt of a small minority to bend the majority to its will by disorganizing the whole system of transport and supply whereby our great centres of population are furnished with food, fuel, and at least in some cases, water. In other words, it was an effort to initiate a familiar operation of war—the cutting off of all supplies from an enemy. What we poor harmless citizens had done to be treated thus as enemies in the field I do not know; but there is no getting over the fact that the general strike was an operation of war—civil war. . . . Meanwhile Sir John Simon pronounced the strike to be illegal; and to banish all doubts,² an Act

¹ The summary of the relevant provisions of the Act and the Bill are quoted from a letter to *The Times* of December 29, 1930, by Lord Buckmaster.

² A charming euphemism!

DEMOCRACY

was passed to render illegal any such initiation of civil war in the future. . . . He (Mr. Ramsay MacDonald) now proposes to repeal the Act . . . and this can only be with the object of restoring to a section of the population the privilege of coercing their fellow-men by an operation of war which shall condemn them in famine, thirst, and cold. In other words, as it seems to me, he desires to empower that section to wage war upon the King and the King's lieges with impunity. But, if it be legal for a body of strikers—rebels, call them what you will—to reduce their fellows to abjection by famine, thirst, and cold, then, presumably, it is illegal for those luckless fellows to resist. So we are to sit still and be starved whenever the trade-unionists may think fit! But we shall not do so. The Swedish people, unless my memory deceives me, in a similar situation turned out with sticks and thrashed the strikers back to their work—a primitive operation of war, but sufficient. We may have to undertake a more serious operation of war, and then there will be civil war in earnest. I am no lawyer, but if a general strike be not illegal, whether the Trade Disputes Act be repealed or not, I should conclude that there is no law in England.

One can sympathize with Sir John Fortescue's argument and point of view, and yet his political and social psychology, when closely examined, is extraordinarily one-sided. He assumes the acceptance of the postulates of democracy but, like nearly all middle-class persons, refuses to apply them to the economic position of the manual workers. It is true that a general strike is a kind of war, in which the strikers seek to gain their end by cutting off supplies from their fellow-citizens. But all strikes and lock-outs are warlike operations of the same nature, and our industrial and economic system is organized, not in accordance with the postulates of democracy, but in accordance with the postulates of war. When the mine-owners combine to lock-out all the miners in order to force them to accept lower wages, you have

"a deliberate attempt of a small minority to bend the majority to its will" by initiating a familiar operation of war—the cutting off of all supplies from an enemy. The wives and children of the miners, too, can say exactly what Sir John says of the middle classes in a general strike: "What we poor harmless citizens have done to be treated thus as enemies in the field, we do not know"—for the mine-owners are simply using their privilege of coercing their fellow-men by an operation of war which shall condemn them in famine, thirst, and cold. It is perfectly legal for a hundred or so of mine-owners, at a moment's notice, to reduce tens of thousands of their fellows to abjection by famine, thirst, and cold, because they enjoy a privilege, established by law and resting upon the institutions of private property and economic monopoly. The system known as capitalism and the employers and middle-class persons, like Sir John Fortescue, who support it, are so accustomed to regard this monopoly and legal privilege of coercion by warlike operation as natural, right, and proper that any attempt on the part of the workers successfully to resist it or to claim the same legal privilege of coercion for labour which is accorded to property seems to them rebellion. And the naturalist who has taken the human animal as his province of study will observe that a creature who would regard itself as a civilized and reasonable human being in the twentieth century after the birth of Jesus Christ and would call itself a Christian could yet think it an excellent thing to flog the working-classes back to their work or—still better—to shoot them,¹ if they claimed for labour the full privileges and powers which result from mon-

¹ This is what I take Sir John to mean by "more serious operation of war", but it is possible that I am giving him more credit than he strictly deserves.

opoly value and which are ensured by law to property owners. The naturalist will also note that this creature thought it right for middle-class people to thrash the workers with sticks back to their work, if they refused to work on the terms offered by the middle classes, whereas he would consider it right that the armed forces of the State should shoot down workers as rebellious if they offered to thrash employers who refused to give employment on the terms demanded by the workers.

All the Sir John Fortescues and Simons, as the case may be, will protest here that that is not what they said or at least meant to say. They will say, with the late Lord Oxford and Asquith (see footnote on page 305) that they have no hostility to the right of combination in industry or to strikes and lock-outs, if they are strikes and lock-outs of a particular kind. They are prepared to allow all the miners to combine to strike against the mine-owners or all the mine-owners to lock-out all the miners, but they will not allow the miners and railwaymen to combine in a strike against mine-owners and railway companies or mine-owners and railway companies to combine in a lock-out of miners and railwaymen. But by using this argument they allow us to get a clear and depressing glimpse of that confused, illogical, and utopian nineteenth-century middle-class communal psychology which has done so much to stultify and discredit democracy and is mainly responsible for the economic and political instability of society in the twentieth century. For behind the claptrap and politician's rhetoric—the tawdry talk about the “King” and “the King’s lieges” and “Free Government” and “the British people”, which one may wipe off the argument like a dirty smudge with a damp rag—there are certain real implications which, in the bitter

world of economic and political reality, will finally affect the actions of the mine-owner signing a lock-out notice, the miner locked out of the mine, the member of the T.U.C. executive called upon to decide upon action in support of the miners, and the soldier whom Sir John Fortescue relies upon to shoot down the strikers. In eighteenth-century France it was not the accepted political clichés and claptrap of the privileged classes which determined the course of history, but the real implications of their communal psychology which loosed the revolution and made the misery of violent disruption inevitable in a society whose organization and working had become intolerably unjust in the eyes of large numbers of the population. So to-day our economic and political history is being determined not by the surface clichés of middle-class patriots and politicians, but by what is implied in their political beliefs, however confused, and their economic desires, however unattainable.

Sir John Fortescue's argument implies that industry, as between the propertied employer and unpropertied worker, shall be organized ultimately on a basis of war, for as between any one employer and his employed, or even in any one industry, the question of what are to be the wages and conditions of employment are to be determined ultimately by the lock-out and the strike—by operations of economic war. But history and reason alike prove that in economic warfare, the more you narrow its field the stronger you make the position of the employer and the weaker the position of the worker. Under the laws of private property the employer enjoys powers of economic privilege and monopoly similar to those powers of political privilege and monopoly against which democracy fought in the eighteenth century. Those monopoly powers when used by an

individual employer against an individual worker are overwhelming; the individual miner who is given a week's notice by his employer is instantly subjected to the threat of famine, thirst, and cold and has no power at all to resist this operation of war. But even if the field be extended to the whole industry or trade, the monopoly power of the employers almost always makes the lock-out within any one trade or industry enormously more effective against the employee than is the strike effective against the employers. In the first place, the lock-out is an immediately effective weapon and operation of war owing to the economic position of the unpropertied workers who are instantly threatened with hunger, thirst, and cold by the cutting off of supplies, whereas, owing to the economic position of the propertied classes, a strike would have to last a very long time before it began to exercise this kind of pressure upon the employer. In the second place, the power of economic monopoly enjoyed by the propertied employer ensures in general that no large body of workers, if locked out, can find alternative employment, whereas the economic position of the workers suffers from a permanent weakness due to the economic system which always keeps a reserve of unemployed, living under the threat of hunger, thirst, and cold, a reservoir of potential "blacklegs", whom the employers may use to turn the strikers' position.

The history of trade union organization and the communal psychology of the manual worker cannot be understood by anyone who ignores these facts. Consciously and unconsciously, in all countries where the economic and industrial system of capitalism has developed, labour has tried to organize itself so that it may eliminate the inherent weakness of its position in economic warfare in relation to the employers, and

may create a weapon of economic monopoly for labour powerful enough to oppose to that of property. There are two ways in which labour can establish a monopoly power of the kind enjoyed by employers and capable of effective use in economic war. The sudden withdrawal of highly-skilled workers from certain special trades or industries may exert temporarily the same kind of pressure upon large numbers of the population as does an extensive lock-out upon the industrial workers. For instance, the labour of some electricians has a monopoly value of this kind in economic war. In practice, however, the places of even the most skilled workers in the most technical operations can be filled temporarily, so that there are very few cases in which this monopoly power of labour can be successfully organized and used. In fact the only way in which the workers can create for labour a monopoly power comparable to that of the employer is by extending the field of economic warfare. The isolated employer who gives notices to all the employees in his mine or factory immediately initiates against them a most effective operation of economic war by bringing to bear upon them the immediate pressure of the cutting off of their supplies, but if the employees of a single factory or mine strike against an employer, they exert no such pressure on anyone and are striking a blow against an opponent in a strong position, for in most cases he can simply fill up the places vacated by the strikers from the reservoir of unemployed. It is only by extending the area of the strike or lock-out that a potential monopoly power is created for labour, and the wider the area the greater potentially is that power. In practice, such power only becomes effective if all the workers can be simultaneously withdrawn from an industry in which complete stoppage

of work has an immediate effect upon the economic life of the country. For instance, the monopoly value of the miners' labour cannot easily be used by them and made effective as a weapon of economic war (in the way in which the mine-owner uses the monopoly value of his ownership of the mines as a weapon against the miner in a lock-out), because there are always in the country at any particular moment accumulated stores of coal, the product of the miners' labour, and it will therefore take months before these stores are exhausted and before the effect is felt of the miners' withdrawing their labour. On the other hand, in the case of an industry like transport, where the product of the workers' labour cannot be accumulated and used by the employer as a weapon *against* the workers themselves in economic warfare, the effect of a withdrawal of labour, provided that it is on a sufficiently large scale, may be immediate and considerable, because the transport workers can use the value of their labour to the community as a weapon of economic war.

The full and monopoly value of the workers' labour can only be converted by them into a weapon of economic war by a general strike, for it is only by the complete withdrawal of industrial labour that the monopoly power of the workers is made fully effective in the way in which the monopoly power of the property owner is made fully effective by the closing of a mine. And the more nearly a strike approximates to a general strike, the more likely it is that the workers will be able to use their power as effectively against the employers as the employers use their power against the workers in economic warfare. But this analysis shows that the pressure exercised by the operations of war of employers and lock-outs must necessarily be different from that

exercised by workers and strikes. The power of the employer comes from the monopoly value of property; the value accrues to himself; his power for war, as against the employed, comes from his ability to cut the worker off from employment and therefore from supplies or from employment except upon the employers' terms. The operation of war is therefore initiated against the worker and the pressure is applied directly upon him and his family. The power of the worker comes mainly from the value of his labour to the community; it has little or no monopoly value either to himself or to the employer; his power for war, as against the employer, comes from his ability, when organized, to demonstrate the collective monopoly value of his labour to the community by ceasing to work. The operation of war is therefore initiated against the employer, but the pressure is applied directly upon the community.

The whole of this economic organization is inconsistent with the fundamental tenets of democracy. The common happiness, which is the object of social organization, according to the democrat, can only be attained by the co-operation of free and equal individuals. For the working of our industrial organization we rely upon a complicated system of privilege, monopoly, and class war. Here there is no co-operation of free and equal individuals for any common object; there is a struggle between the employer for profits and the employed for wages. The quantity of material things or wealth which each side can snatch for itself from the operation of the economic system is determined ultimately by a kind of economic war, by the force which it can bring to bear upon some section of the community. The employers rely upon the monopoly power which they possess from the ownership of property and the instruments of pro-

duction, and the pressure that they can therefore apply by cutting off the workers from employment unless they accept the employers' terms; the workers rely upon establishing a monopoly power of labour and the pressure that they can therefore apply by a general stoppage of work and the cutting off of supplies.

The middle-class democrat of the type of Sir John Fortescue never faces the fact that the whole system is fundamentally inconsistent with the psychology and principles of democracy. He is afraid—and perhaps with reason—that if he did so, he might wake up next morning to find himself what is called a socialist. He proposes to maintain by law the privileged position and monopoly power of property and the employers, but to forbid by law the establishment of a privileged position and monopoly power for labour. Within the single factory or the single trade, industry is to be organized on a system of legalized class-war, the lock-out and the strike, *i.e.* within the area in which the monopoly power of property and the lock-out are most effective against labour; but just at the point at which the monopoly power of labour and the strike begin to become effective, Sir John remembers democracy and “the community”, and proposes to declare all economic war illegal. He is enabled to perform this social somersault because the pressure exercised by the employers and a lock-out is applied to the workers, while that exercised by the workers and a strike is applied to the middle classes, and in his social philosophy he identifies—perhaps unconsciously—the middle classes with the community. To apply pressure to the community is interpreted as “challenging the State” and the State, in neo-authoritarian psychology, is sacrosanct. And so Sir John Fortescue is able logically to rationalize

his class-bias, and to find good reasons for legalizing the system of economic civil war so long as it works to the advantage of the middle and employing classes, and to declare it illegal and a crime against the State—to thrash the workers back to their work or shoot them down as rebels—as soon as the war reaches the point at which it may be to the advantage of labour.

In discussing this question we have stumbled upon perhaps the most disastrous inconsistency in the bourgeois democratic psychology of the nineteenth century, and we shall have frequently to refer to it again in the course of this book, for the main causes for the failure of political democracy can be traced to the industrial and economic history of the last sixty years. It is no accident of history that at the beginning of the nineteenth century the aristocrat was the respectable patriot who shot down the political democrat as a revolutionary and traitor, while at the end of the century the political democrat is the respectable patriot whose painful duty it has become to shoot down traitors and revolutionaries in the person of socialists and communists. The middle-class political democrats imagined that it was possible to confine democratic psychology within certain limited "political" compartments, and that freedom, equality, and happiness need only be considered socially in their relation to politics and the political organization. They hoped to establish a democratic form of society by abolishing that system of political privilege obviously inconsistent with the democratic attitude towards happiness, freedom, and equality, while retaining a similar system of privilege in the economic organization. They sought to order human society in such a way that political relations should be regulated by the pacific co-operation of

free and politically equal individuals, while leaving economic relations to be determined by a kind of economic civil war, a perpetual struggle between economically privileged and unprivileged classes and individuals. And, like Sir John Fortescue in 1930, they proposed to regulate this economic struggle by a kind of code of "The Laws of Economic War", the effect of which was to make the weapons of the privileged classes legal and those of the unprivileged classes illegal.¹

I have been led into this discussion of the General Strike and contemporary economic psychology by a natural transition from my examination of patriotism

¹ It is interesting to remark that the middle-class communal psychology, patriotic and democratic, from which sprang this idea of legalizing economic war "up to a point" and then making certain kinds of weapons and methods illegal, also gave birth to the idea of regulating international war by "Laws of War" which prohibit the use of certain weapons. The history of international war shows that the idea, which gives scope for much well-meaning and confused sentimentality and naïve cunning, does not work in practice. War is an appeal to force, and if human beings are content to regulate their relations by force, whether international or economic, in the last resort either side will use any weapon or method of fighting which gives it a chance of ensuring victory or of escaping defeat. If war is tolerated, before war breaks out, each side attempts to make the use of those weapons illegal which will prove most disadvantageous to it; after war breaks out, it will use any weapon, legal or illegal, which will give it an advantage. The pacific and democratic patriot who thought to combine democracy with international war, humanely and democratically regulated by Hague Conventions, legalizing high explosives and prohibiting the use of poison gas, has been proved by history to be a deluded sentimentalist. If he wants peace and democracy, he must change from a pacific and democratic patriot into a democratic pacifist and internationalist. So, too, the middle-class democratic patriot who thinks to combine democracy with the economic war of strikes and lock-outs, carefully regulated so that he may never be inconvenienced by general strikes, legalizing the lock-outs which are to the advantage of the employers and prohibiting those strikes which may be of advantage to the workers, will find that he cannot have the best of two inconsistent worlds. If he wants peace and democracy, he must change from a middle-class democratic patriot into a — but I cannot say what he should become until I have finished the analysis of democracy.

as an example of neo-authoritarianism. We must leave the subject, at any rate for the moment, noting that, as we leave it, we are also leaving the neo-authoritarian *Times* maintaining that workers who combine in a strike the primary object of which is connected with conditions of labour of persons not employed in the trade or industry in which the strike takes place are "challenging the State", and that we leave the neo-authoritarian Sir John Fortescue maintaining that if industrial workers combine to withdraw their labour in such circumstances, the rest of the population should turn out with sticks and thrash them back to work. Such are the "liberties and privileges of the people of these islands", "the laws of England and the people's birthright", if entrusted to those who try to combine the psychology of democracy with that of middle-class capitalism and neo-authoritarian patriotism. As they thrash the worker back to his work, they will probably cry: "Dans un état libre, tout homme qui est censé avoir une âme libre, doit être gouverné par lui-même".

Two other forms of neo-authoritarianism, nationalism, and imperialism, are closely related to patriotism. The nationalist and imperialist psychologies will have to be examined at length later in this book; here I shall only briefly point out their relation to the early democratic conception and ideal of liberty. The assumption is often made, particularly in Great Britain, that nationality is good and nationalism is bad. A sense of nationality is identified with patriotic loyalty to one's "nation", while nationalism is regarded as the sense of nationality carried to excess or perverted. The view is almost certainly erroneous, and is the result of assuming communal psychology to be much more simple

and definite than in fact it is. The modern sense of nationality is an extremely complex and vague patriotic attitude, embracing a large number of ideas and ideals regarding one's nation or country and one's fellow-countrymen. Such a psychological complex has necessarily two aspects, the internal and the external. The German is aware of his nationality in his relations both to Germans and to non-Germans, the Frenchman of his in his relations both to Frenchmen and to non-Frenchmen. Nationality is the internal aspect and nationalism the external. Nationalism is not an excessive or perverted sense of nationality; it is the sense of nationality when we feel ourselves in contact with those from whom the very ties of nationality dis sever us. For the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century the psychology of nationality and nationalism was profoundly influenced by the psychology of democracy. Mazzini speaks for his age, and in Mazzini it is almost impossible to say where the democrat ends and the patriot begins, or vice versa. The fundamental concepts of democracy were, as we have seen, happiness, equality, and liberty. Whereas the early democrats applied these concepts to the relations between individuals and classes regarded as the subjects of government within a single State, Mazzini applied them to the relations of individuals and groups regarded as racially or "nationally" differentiated. He held that the Italians, like the Austrians, should have the power to "do what they like", should govern themselves in their own way and pursue what seemed to them to be Italian happiness without interference from those who were not Italians. But Mazzini's nationalism was just as democratic as his sense of nationality. It would have seemed to him just as wrong socially that the Austrians should

be subjected to the Italians as that the Italians should be subjected to the Austrians."

In the latter part of the nineteenth century the democratic, Mazzinian type of patriotism and nationalism gradually disappeared. It was destroyed by a new psychology of patriotism, which may be studied in the attitude of the English to the Irish between 1880 and 1920, of the Germans to the Poles and Alsatians between 1870 and 1918, of the French to the Germans and Alsatians since 1918, of the Italians to the Austrians and Slavs since 1918, of the Poles to the Esthonians, Germans, Russians, and Ukrainians since 1918, of the Austrians to the Serbs between 1900 and 1914. This new type of patriotism is primarily authoritarian. The nation itself, an abstraction, is deified, and becomes infinitely more important than the individuals who compose it. Hence the happiness, equality, and liberty of any racial minority within it are of little or no importance. They must be sacrificed to "national unity". Thus the Pole in Germany, the Austrian in Italy, or the Irishman within Great Britain and Ireland must be ruled by the racial majority. Bismarck in Berlin and the Junkers of the Prussian Marches are the right people to determine what lives the Poles shall live in Posen and Silesia and what is Polish happiness; and Mr. Chamberlain in Birmingham and the Duke of Devonshire behind the walls of his great house in Piccadilly are the ultimate authorities for what Irishman shall call happiness in the city of Dublin or the hills of Kerry.

The psychology of imperialism is only an extension or development of the psychology of nationalism. The deity is an Empire instead of a nation; with imperialism the god has become bigger, and it is almost a religious axiom that the bigger the god,

the more ruthless is his authority. The whole idea of an Empire is that it shall be large and shall be based upon the art of "ruling". The difference between an imperial and a non-imperial State is that the first embraces national or racial minorities which are homogeneous and at the same time subject to authority at the centre, while the second is without such appendages in subjection. The difference is not clear cut because the non-imperial State with subject racial minorities, *e.g.* Czecho-Slovakia, may pass through an infinite series of gradations into an imperial State with subject racial minorities, like the late German Empire or existing British Empire. As with most political phenomena, the difference, when closely examined, will be found to be partly material and partly psychological. The subject minorities in the succession States to the old Austrian-Hungarian Empire are the victims of nationalism, not imperialism, partly because those States are small and compact and the minorities more or less embedded in the whole population, and partly because the ruling races think and feel nationally rather than imperially. On the other hand, the minorities in the old Austrian-Hungarian Empire were the victims of imperialism as well as of nationalism, partly because the federal State was of vast extent and the subject minorities formed homogeneous units capable and desirous of "sovereign" independence, and partly because the ruling classes thought and felt imperially as well as nationally. The deity whom the Czech worships and to whom he proposes to sacrifice a few Germans is a Czecho-Slovakian State; the deity worshipped by Count Berchtold, and to whom he sacrificed not only Czechs, Slovaks, Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, but the hecatombs of the war, was not a German

State, but a congeries of provinces and peoples visualized as an "empire" in which political power was reserved to Germans, Hungarians, and a half-imbecile old gentleman officially entitled "His Majesty the Emperor of Austria, King of Bohemia, etc., and Apostolic King of Hungary".

Imperialism as a political system and a communal psychology is often assumed to be peculiar to the political relations between the white and coloured races, but the assumption is false and due to the tendency to oversimplify history and political psychology. The attitude of the Russians and Germans towards the Poles between 1795 and 1918 was, no doubt, nationalist, but it had an element in it which went beyond nationalism. There was the desire to incorporate and absorb within a great State or an Empire, both a territory and a people, a consciousness of the duty of ruling an inferior race. The effect of this imperial as distinct from the national element can be traced in both the history and political structure of Russia and Germany during the nineteenth century. Again in the attitude of Englishmen towards what are now known as the Self-governing Dominions during the greater part of that century there was no trace of national or nationalist feeling, but there was an element which can be only described as diluted imperialism. Canada, Australia and New Zealand, and South Africa were colonies, parts of the Empire, which should be permitted, as far as possible, to manage for themselves their own internal affairs, but which in all other matters were dependent upon and subordinate to the British Government in London. As the century waned, the colonists became more and more determined not to accept in any respect a position of dependence and subordination, and Englishmen, who resisted the

claim of Irishmen to self-government, were prepared to concede to Canadians, Australians, New Zealanders, and South Africans the claim to equality of status, and therefore virtually of independence. Here again the change in psychology is reflected in history and political structure. The moment when imperialism definitely ceased to affect the relations between the inhabitants of the British Isles and those of Canada, Newfoundland, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand is marked by the change of title from Colony to Self-governing Dominion and from the authoritarian British Empire to the democratic British Commonwealth of Nations.

But though imperialism is not confined to the relations between Europeans and non-Europeans, it is there that one can study it best in its purest and most virulent forms. The racial differences are very great and extend from the pigment in the infant's skin to habits of eating and washing, from the number and treatment of one's wives to the number and worship of one's Gods. It is even more obvious that a man who eats with a fork and worships the Holy Trinity is naturally superior to a man who eats with his fingers and worships the Buddha than that a man who eats with a fork and worships the Union Jack is superior to one who eats with a fork and worships the Tricolor. Hence the relation of the European to the Asiatic or African, wherever the former has found it possible and profitable to rule the latter, has easily and naturally become authoritarian. For an Englishman the psychology of imperialism can best be studied in the characteristic attitude of the Anglo-Indian to the inhabitants of India. The Anglo-Indian is proud of the bigness of his deity, the Empire, and to rob the Empire of India would for him mean sacrilege. He is also proud that Englishmen should

rule India so obviously for the benefit of the Indians. He is convinced of the superiority of the Englishman to the Hindu politically and socially. The Englishman, representing the "Empire", knows what is good for the Indian, what the Indian ought to do and even more, what he ought to want to do. The psychology is purely authoritarian and anti-democratic. It is based on a negation of the democratic ideas of individual equality and freedom. In a book of personal reminiscences, published in 1930, a distinguished Indian Civil Servant, Sir Bampfylde Fuller, in defending the Anglo-Indian attitude towards the Indian demand for self-government, remarks that "it is a greater thing to be fed regularly than to be free". In a letter to the *Manchester Guardian* of January 8, 1930, Lord Lothian, in discussing the problem of authority in the political and industrial system of Great Britain, remarks that freedom is more important than comfort, as the soul than the body. The two remarks show in a few words the psychological gulf between authoritarianism and democracy.

In the psychology of nationalism and imperialism, it will be observed, a feeling of personal superiority plays a prominent part. The dominant nationality or race regards itself as politically superior to the subject nationality or race. Its political attitude and claims are, therefore, similar to those of the privileged aristocracies in Europe against which democracy fought its first battles. Owing to this sense of superiority the German in Poland and the Englishman in India thought it personally his right and his duty to determine what was politically good for the Pole and the Indian. This class feeling, with its deep-seated superiority and inferiority complexes, is always active where nationalism or imperialism affects the structure of society. Its clash with democracy

comes ultimately on the question of political and social equality. But one must distinguish another and a very important strand in the intricate psychology of nationalism and imperialism. The history of Germany and Poland and of Britain and India during the last century has not been determined only by economics or by those convictions of superiority which induce individuals, nations, and races to believe that it is their right and duty to rule other people. It has also been determined by the attitude of Germans and Britons to those abstractions or deities, the German nation and the British Empire. The nationalist German was convinced that it was for the good of Germany and of the Poles themselves that the Poles should be incorporated in and their political destinies ordered by Germans; and in exactly the same way the patriotic Englishman believes that it is for the good of the British Empire and of Indians and Africans that these subject races should be incorporated in the Empire and their political destinies ordered by Englishmen. In this psychology there is a curious mixture of religious belief and emotion with what I propose to call "mechanical authoritarianism".

The religious element is obvious and has been referred to above. From the middle of the eighteenth century until the present day the ancient, official Gods of the world's four major religions have been steadily losing their hold upon the human mind. In this *Götterdämmerung* many people who still feel the impulse of religious belief and emotion have transferred them from Jehovah, the Trinity, or Allah to other objects. In the transference patriotism has often gained what the more ancient religions have lost; the altar of the nation or the empire is substituted for that of Christ or the Virgin Mary; and

the State exacts that worship and loyalty which before was given to the Churches.¹ This religious feeling always plays an active part in the psychology of imperialism. The incorporation of the Polish provinces in the German and of India in the British Empire was part of the visible power and glory of these new deities. The Poles or Indians, as long as they remained German or British subjects, remained members of the true faith, and the patriotic German or Englishman instinctively felt towards the "disloyal" Pole or Indian what in the seventeenth century the true believer felt towards the heretic.

But, particularly during the last fifty or sixty years, another ingredient can be observed in the minds of imperialists and nationalists. It is extraordinarily unlike the religious, and the singular capacity of the human mind to combine the incongruous has alone succeeded in reconciling them. We live, and have now lived for over a century, as many people have observed, in the machine age. It is inevitable

¹ It is a significant fact that the transference began immediately after the French Revolution broke out. After the taking of the Bastille the communes formed district federations and these again united in a national federation. On July 14, 1790, on the Champs de Mars in Paris the national federation "took the oath to the new Fatherland". M. A. Aulard in *Christianity and the French Revolution* (translated by Lady Frazer, 1927) writes: "The name of religion is the only one which can be applied to this movement of union. It was the religion of the Fatherland. It had altars to the Fatherland. These altars were erected by the district federations in fairly large numbers. They were the centre of all the manifestations of the National Federation, not only in Paris and Lyons, but in all the towns and villages of which I have read the proceedings. Everywhere on this 14th July Frenchmen stood round the altar of the Fatherland. These altars—of different forms in different places, but not modelled on the Catholic altar—were seldom or never set up in churches, but in the open air, in a public square, or a field. At this altar the civic oath was taken. Before the altar orators celebrated the praises of the Fatherland." The development of this new religion and the extraordinary manifestations of its creed, dogma, and symbols in modern times are admirably described and analysed by Professor Carlton Hayes in chapter iv. of his *Essays on Nationalism* (1926).

that the mechanization of daily life should have had a great effect upon our minds. "Efficiency" is a new word and almost entirely a modern idea; it is closely connected with the civilization of the machine; it is perpetually upon our lips and in our minds when we are discussing political and social problems. The modern man tends to regard the mechanical as necessarily good; there can be no higher praise of anything than to say of it: "It goes like a machine". This system of values based upon the mechanical is applied to politics and society. Nearly everyone would say that a government which "worked like a machine" would be a good government, and though they might not say the same of their own and other people's lives, they habitually act and speak as if they believed it.

This communal psychology of the machine applied to human society has some truth and appropriateness in it, but also much confused thinking and a false scale of values. It is true that a machine which works mechanically is an efficient machine and so far good. It is also true that a government which works like a machine will be in some ways an efficient government—it will be mechanically efficient. If it works mechanically in those spheres of human life which are better mechanized, it will so far be a good government. If for instance it is desirable that the lighting of our houses, the collection of taxes, the regulation of traffic, or the education of our children should be effected or regulated mechanically, it is desirable that the services should be performed with mechanical efficiency. But the value of a machine or of mechanization does not depend solely on mechanical efficiency; it depends to a very great extent upon the value of what the machine produces. The value of the most efficient

contraceptive is negligible to a Roman Catholic who regards the Pope, as infallible on the difficult subject of birth control, and anyone who is not a convinced believer in the blessings of war will not go into any ecstasy over the value of the most efficient poison gas.

A government, like poison gas, contraceptives, and all other mechanical instruments and devices, ought to be judged ethically by what it produces, not by the efficiency with which it turns out its products. The nationalist or imperialist, whose mind has been moulded by the psychology of the machine age, loses sight of this; the mere fact that the lives of vast numbers of persons are regulated with efficient uniformity by a single governmental machine seems to him a good thing. As a patriot, he worships his country or empire, worshipping it and sacrificing to it with the religious feelings which his ancestors felt towards their gods or God, but, born in and moulded by the machine age, his God must be, in part, a machine. The German nationalists sincerely believed that there was something good in the mechanical regimentation of all the peoples under the Kaiser's government within the German Empire. In the German Empire of their dreams every individual would be an efficient part of this vast and powerful machine, performing the perpetual goose-step of his life submissively to the service of the machine-god and under the directions of his priests, the ruling classes. That Poles should wish to speak Polish upset the linguistic goose-step and disturbed the mechanical uniformity of a German Empire and government; that the people of Alsace should have desired autonomy or independence and not have welcomed the opportunity of submitting themselves to the machinery of Prussian government

seemed to them a wilful perversity—it was the kind of obstinate refusal to accept the true faith and worship the true God which in earlier times had induced good but exasperated men to burn heretics.

This psychology of mechanical authoritarianism amalgamated with patriotism to form imperialism is not confined to Germany. It has been an important ingredient in the psychology which has produced the British Empire, though here it has been much more subtly concealed than in the German Empire, owing to the Englishman's traditional dislike of clear thinking and his instinct for political compromise. When Sir Bampfylde Fuller argues in favour of the continuance of the British Raj in India by saying that "it is a greater thing to be fed regularly than to be free", the emphasis is as much upon the regularity as upon the food. The Government of India does not supply Indians with meals or food, but it does subject them to the machinery of a type of government which we have developed in western Europe. The machine is efficient in imposing uniformly upon the population a regular system of European law and order, in regularly collecting taxes, in making roads which are kept in regular repair and in building and maintaining railways upon which trains depart and arrive regularly according to the time table. These are, of course, extremely important functions of government, and unless they are efficiently performed, what Europeans call civilization is impossible. The imperialist, however, tends to regard them as the sole criterion and justification of government. The Empire is for him partly a symbol, partly an object for his religious emotions, and partly an efficient machine for fitting over the lives of every kind of race and people, white, black, brown, and yellow, this mechanical framework of law, order, and ad-

ministration. What lives individuals want to live within the framework is of negligible importance; the machine itself, being half a god, knows best what is good for human beings who must prefer regular meals to freedom. Those who question the authority of the machine, who claim the right to do what they want and to be governed by themselves, are rebels and extremists against whose claims to freedom of soul it is the primary duty of all loyal citizens to vindicate the machinery of law and order—against the claims of Michael Collins in Ireland, of Zaglul Pasha in Egypt, or of Mr. Gandhi in India.

It is worth while to examine more closely an actual and recent exhibition of this imperialistic psychology. Early in 1931 the conversations between the Viceroy of India and Mr. Gandhi led to an agreement under which the civil disobedience campaign was to cease, and it seemed for the first time possible that the Indian Congress Party would co-operate in the work of the Round-Table Conference which was trying to devise a new constitution for India. News of this settlement was immediately followed by a violent attack by the imperialist Press and politicians both upon the Viceroy and Government for having “negotiated” with Mr. Gandhi and upon Mr. Baldwin in so far as he had committed the Conservative Government to any support of the Government’s policy. Two debates took place in Parliament, one on March 12 in the House of Commons and the other on March 18 in the House of Lords, in which those who took this view stated the imperialist case in its most considered and temperate form. In the Commons that case was stated most ably by Mr. Winston Churchill, in the Lords by Lord Lloyd, who, as High Commissioner in Egypt, had already shown himself by his attitude to the Zagluli Party or Wafd an irreconcilable op-

ponent of the claim by a subject people within the British Empire to self-government or independence. Lord Lloyd's attitude was summarized in a leading article in *The Times*, on the morning after the debate in the House of Lords, in these words: "Lord Lloyd thinks the whole method of conference adverse to efficient government". The sentence also, in effect, summarizes Mr. Churchill's views and the psychology of imperialism. Apart from the Empire as an object of pride and religious worship, the only political criterion in this psychology is "efficient government". Mr. Churchill saw in the Indian situation nothing but our duty to remain there—i.e. our religious duty as patriotic Englishmen to keep the Empire intact—and our duty to maintain "efficient government".

But consider for a moment what this "Indian situation" really was. On the one side in India we had the Indian Government, an authoritarian Government in the hands of Englishmen responsible to the Viceroy, who is appointed by the British Government and is himself ultimately responsible to the two Houses of Parliament sitting in London. Except in so far as the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms had introduced some measure of local or provincial self-government, the framework which government imposes upon our lives was determined for Indians by aliens. On the other side we had a large body of educated Indians demanding that the principles of democracy should be applied to Indian government and that Indians should be allowed politically to determine their own lives. The Congress Party and Mr. Gandhi were the protagonists of these claims. It is true that in all such cases of demand for political self-government the claim does not come from the mass of the population. In the England of Charles I., the France

of Louis XVI., the Italy of Mazzini and Garibaldi, the Ireland of Michael Collins, the Egypt of Zaglul Pasha, and the India of Mr. Gandhi, the articulate demands come from an articulate and usually small minority. The political reality of the demand is determined by the response which the active minority awakens in the normally passive majority. The response of the Indian peasants to the Congress Party and Mr. Gandhi was at least as real as that of the Irish peasants to Parnell or the Sinn Fein leaders, or that of the Egyptian fellahen to the Wafd.

The political psychology of Lord Lloyd, Mr. Churchill, and those who spoke for imperialism in this case was, therefore, purely authoritarian. They demanded that the only criteria of "good government" which should be considered in India were authority and efficiency. Neither the products of the efficient governmental machine nor the wishes of those subjected to the machinery were to be considered. Indeed, even consultation and negotiation with those among the governed who had views of their own as to how they ought to be governed were condemned on the ground that they would impair the efficiency of government. Nothing could show more clearly than this incident the fundamental beliefs in the psychology of imperialism and how inconsistent they are with the original attitude towards freedom in democratic psychology.

The authoritarian elements in the psychology of socialism, communism, and fascism spring from the same recesses of the human mind and heart as do those in patriotism, nationalism, and imperialism, but the whole subject will require further exploration which must be left to a later section in which I shall have to examine the history of what actually happened to democracy and democratic psychology

DEMOCRACY

in the nineteenth century. My purpose here has been merely to make clear the original and fundamental attitude of democrats towards liberty, and it seemed easier to do this by contrasting it with some contemporary examples of authoritarian psychology in patriotism, nationalism, and imperialism. But it is now time to return to democracy.

I have now completed the analysis of the primary ideas and ideals underlying democratic psychology. I have shown that they can be traced ultimately to a consciousness of individuality which in the eighteenth century produced a new psychological attitude towards happiness, social and political equality, and liberty. This attitude condensed into the democratic beliefs with regard to happiness, equality, and liberty which have been examined at length in the preceding pages. Democracy, as it was thus produced in the heads of democrats, may be defined as the idea that government should exist for the benefit of free and equal citizens, politically united in a common purpose—the happiness of each and all. Democracy started, therefore, as an ideal, a series of beliefs with regard to what the end and object of social and political organization should be. But an ideal in politics without some notion of how to attain it is as useless as a hypothesis in science without some notion of how to test it. The early democrats were immediately faced with this question—by what political arrangements and organization their ideal of a democratic society could be attained. They had no doubt themselves as to the answer to this question, and they gave it with such clearness that many people have mistaken the means to democracy for democracy itself. They held first that government for the common benefit of free and

equal citizens could only be attained if government were based upon the consent of the governed. Thus in the American Declaration of Independence governments are stated to "derive their just powers from the consent of the governed", and Article III. of the *Déclaration des Droits* maintains that "le principe de toute souveraineté réside essentiellement dans la nation. Nul corps, nul individu ne peut exercer d'autorité qui n'émane expressément." A corollary of this doctrine of consent, very important at the time at which it was first enunciated and not without significance even in the world of to-day, is explicitly stated in the American Declaration of Independence as follows: "Whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness".

So far the position is comparatively simple; it becomes more difficult as soon as the necessary attempt is made to put this principle of consent into practice. French democracy, introducing the metaphysical conception of the General Will, maintained that the law must be an expression of that Will and therefore that every citizen must have an equal right to an equal share in its formation:

La loi est l'expression de la volonté générale. Tous les citoyens ont droit de concourir personnellement, ou par leurs représentants, à sa formation. (Article VI. of the Déclaration.)

In effect this is to say that, if government is to depend upon the consent of the governed, and each citizen is politically equal, every citizen must have

an equal share in making the law, and this seems to lead inevitably to the right of suffrage and majority rule. American democracy reached exactly the same position by a slightly different and less metaphysical route. The argument which led to it must be studied in the Declaration of Rights, which formed the basis of the Declaration of Independence:

Government is, or ought to be, instituted for the common benefit and security of the people, nation, or community; and whenever any government shall be found inadequate or contrary to these purposes, a majority of the community hath an indubitable, inalienable, and infeasible right to reform, alter, or abolish it, in such manner as shall be judged most conducive to the public weal. . . . Elections of members to serve as representatives of the people in assembly ought to be free; and all men, having sufficient evidence of permanent common interest with, and attachment to, the community, have the right of suffrage, and cannot be taxed or deprived of their property for public uses without their own consent or that of their representatives so elected, nor bound by any law to which they have not, in like manner, assented for the public good.

I have now completed my investigation of the original political idea of democracy, and it will be useful to sum up the present position of the enquiry before passing on to examine the subsequent fate of this idea in the nineteenth century. Democracy begins in the heads of men living in the seventeenth century and the eighteenth century. Its origins may be traced to an attitude of mind to and a consciousness of individuality. It was part of one of those profound changes in human psychology which produced all kinds of new ideas in philosophy, religion, politics, economics, and art. Democracy was the political condensation of this new psychology. It implied certain beliefs with regard to happiness,

equality, and liberty, and their relevance or importance in human society. At this stage in its history democracy was not a metaphysical or scientific doctrine about the nature of man nor a political dogma about votes and majorities and the machinery of government. It was rather a statement of what ought to be the object of political organization in human society, a statement which I have compressed above into the definition: "Government should exist for the benefit of free and equal citizens, politically united in a common purpose—the happiness of each and all". Such an idea was in the eighteenth century revolutionary and, if acted upon, must destroy most of the existing fabric of society. Before 1776 all Governments existed for the purpose of maintaining a complicated system of privilege and political inequality; the criterion of good government was not the happiness and freedom of common men, but the power of ruling classes displayed in magnificence at home and victory abroad; society was felt to be held together politically, not by a common purpose, but by authority and obedience.

This new psychology in the eighteenth century produced one of those crises described in Chapter II. of Part I. (pages 55 and 56). The structure of society was extremely rigid, because it was almost entirely the work of dead men and dead ideas. Its customs and institutions and its system of government, into which these dead men had built their ideas and ideals, were concerned with the preservation of privilege and prerogative. With such customs and institutions the new psychology was completely incompatible, for it was concerned with equality and freedom and happiness. It was, therefore, inevitable that the interaction of the structure of society and the new communal psychology should be violent and that

there should be a bitter struggle between the old order and the new. The democrats were demanding a fundamental change in the attitude of governments and ruling classes to their functions and to the end and object of social and political organization.

At this point, as nearly always happens in political history, the struggle with regard to ends became largely obscured by the struggle with regard to means. Democrats, descending into the arena of practical politics, had to formulate a political programme, to show what steps should actually be taken in order that government might exist for the benefit of free and equal citizens united in a common purpose—the happiness of each and all. They had their programme ready: government based on the consent of the governed, the right to vote, the right of the people to alter or abolish its government, majority rule, and a charter of civil liberties.

As soon as the programme was stated, the struggle became concentrated upon it and democracy became hopelessly confused with the means suggested by democrats for attaining democracy. People forgot to consider any longer what kind of civilization they desired and the relations between freedom, equality, and happiness in the passion with which they argued whether a lodger ought to have a vote or whether his ability to use it would or would not be equal to that of the eldest son of an earl. As more and more citizens were given the legal right to record a vote every four or seven years, some people rejoiced in “the irresistible movement of democracy”, and as it became clear that more and more citizens were unable to use the vote intelligently, other people rejoiced in the inevitable failure of democracy. One hundred years after Louis XVI.’s subjects had cut his head off in the name of democracy, Queen Victoria was queru-

lously anathematizing democracy, which to her was embodied in John Bright, Joseph Chamberlain, and Sir Charles Dilke, and was urging a Liberal Prime Minister firmly to resist the unwarrantable interference of the House of Commons in asking ministers questions.¹ Fifty years later, as we have seen, Sir John Fortescue, secure in the knowledge that we enjoy universal suffrage, can encourage his fellow-citizens in the name of democracy to turn out with sticks and thrash strikers back to their work.

These facts are, however, part of the history of democracy in the nineteenth century, a subject which I propose to examine in greater detail in the next volume of this book. But the nature of these facts has already made one thing clear. An enquiry into the history of democracy between 1789 and 1931 must have two distinct objects. First we want to know what has happened in communal psychology to those primary ideas with regard to happiness, equality, and freedom which gave birth to democracy, and how far the civilization and society of to-day has become, in the fundamental sense, democratic. Secondly—and this is an entirely different question—we shall have to enquire to what extent the particular methods and political machinery, adopted by democrats for establishing democratic governments, have succeeded or failed to produce democratic societies.

¹ *Letters of Queen Victoria, 1879-1885*, second series, vol. iii. pp. 107-108.

INDEX OF PERSONS

- Acton, 45, 46
 Alexander, 50
 Alexander I. of Rumania, 182, 183
 Alexander the Great, 53
 Aristotle, 55, 56
 Arnold, Matthew, 281-287
 Asquith, H. H. Prime Minister,
 28, 29, 307, 311
 Arthur, Mr. Justice, 305, 307
 Aulard, A., 328
 Austen, Jane, 247

 Babeuf, 206
 Baldwin, Stanley, 304, 332
 Balfour, Lord, 299
 Balzac, 247
 Balzac, Edmond-Jean-François,
 133 ff.
 Bentham, Jeremy, 53, 190, 202,
 220, 254, 260
 Berchtold, Count, 323
 Bethmann-Hollweg, Herr, 28, 32,
 33, 76, 77
 Bismarck, 322
 Bright, John, 37, 285, 340
 Burke, 90, 92, 93, 94, 105, 115,
 122, 145, 158, 172, 194, 212,
 234, 254, 255, 274
 Calonne, 127
 Canning, 91
 Carlyle, T., 251
 Catherine the Great, 83, 84, 85,
 105, 123
 Cecil, Robert (Marquis of Salis-
 bury), 210-216
 Chamberlain, Joseph, 322, 340
 Chesterfield, Lord, 96, 269
 Churchill, Winston, 299, 305,
 306, 307, 308
 Clemenceau, M., 65, 66, 67
 Clinton, William, 106, 40, 153
 Cobden, M., 106, 114
 Coleridge, John, 106, 110
 Colver, Samuel, 44, 45, 46, 51

 Dante, 243
 D'Argenson, 131, 134
 Desmoulins, Théophile, 222
 De Witt, W., 247
 Du Belland, Madame, 103

 Edward VII., 64
 Edwards, 120, 190, 193
 Franklin, 96, 99, 200, 220
 Erie, Lord, 147

 Flaubert, 243
 Fosterson, Sir John, 308 ff., 340
 Francis Joseph of Austria, 83, 85,
 324
 Frederick the Great, 82, 123
 Fuller, Sir Rampsyde, 326, 331

 Gandhi, Mr., 332-334
 Garvin, J. L., 100, ff.
 George III., 83, 84, 90, 100 ff.,
 105
 George V., 83
 George, Lloyd, 65, 67, 76
 Giddy, Davies, 113
 Gladstone, 37, 227, 235
 Godwin, William, 115, 171, 252
 Goldsmith, Oliver, 147

 Halévy, E., 190

AFTER THE DELUGE

- Hammond, J. L. and Barbara, 98, 110, 113, 193
 Hayes, Professor Carlton, 328
 Heard, Gerald, 242
 Hearnshaw, Professor F. J. C., 168-169
 Helvétius, 202-204
 Hobbes, Thomas, 138, 170, 213, 230-234, 273
 Ibsen, 243, 248
 Jefferson, 184, 185, 198
 Johnson, Dr., 147, 148, 149, 194
 Joseph II. of Austria, 83, 84, 123
 Keats, John, 243
 Kipling, Rudyard, 299
 La Bruyère, 263, 269
 Lafayette, 47, 184
 Laski, Professor H. J., 273
 Lear, King, 245
 Lenin, 87, 189
 Lloyd, Lord, 332-334
 Lothian, Lord, 326
 Louis XIV. of France, 116, 118, 132 ff., 176
 Louis XV. of France, 116, 117, 118, 132 ff., 155
 Louis XVI. of France, 37, 83, 88, 89, 118 ff., 132 ff., 145, 339
 Luther, 58, 62, 170, 220
 Mably, 206
 Macaulay, 45
 Macchiavelli, 170
 Macdonell, Sir John, 228
 Madison, 207-209
 Marat, 47, 141
 Maria Teresa, 83, 88, 105, 119, 131
 Marie Antoinette, 106, 119 ff., 149
 Martin, Kingsley, 201, 301
 Marx, Karl, 31, 38 ff., 159, 204
 Mazzini, 321
 Mencken, H. L., 173, 188, 258-268
 Mercy-Argenteau, Comte de, 119, 122
 Metternich, 172, 173
 Mill, John Stuart, 143
 Milton, 243
 Mirabeau, 37, 47
 Montaigne, 220, 231, 244
 Montesquieu, 36, 120, 138, 143, 198-200, 239, 273
 More, Hannah, 192 ff., 218
 Morelly, 206
 Mussolini, 87, 189
 Namier, L. B., 176
 Napoleon, 47, 129
 Nicholas II., Tsar, 35
 North, Lord, 101 ff., 111, 134
 Paine, Tom, 115, 149, 153, 171, 196, 255, 256
 Palmerston, 85
 Parrington, V. L., 180
 Penman, John Simpson, 167
 Pepys, Samuel, 135 ff.
 Pericles, 47, 154, 272
 Plato, 63, 213
 Polybius, 44, 46
 Racine, 243, 248
 Richardson, Samuel, 147, 246
 Richelieu, Duc de, 132
 Romilly, Sir Samuel, 108
 Rousseau, 36, 120, 130, 138, 139, 140, 143, 200-202, 206, 213, 220, 239, 254
 Rouston, M., 94, 130, 132, 139
 Shakespeare, 53, 244-245
 Simon, Sir John, 299, 393, 305, 307
 Socrates, 47, 53, 54, 228
 Sophocles, 50, 53, 243
 Sorel, 143
 Spengler, Oswald, 173
 Swift, Jonathan, 200, 229, 239
 Sykes, Sir Percy, 49
 Taine, 45, 46
 Temperley, Harold, 91
 Thucydides, 154, 243
 Tocqueville, A. de, 128, 141, 271
 Tolstoy, 244, 254
 Turgenev, 245

INDEX

Turgot, 105, 124, 126, 127
Turner, Thomas, 150 ff.

Victoria, Queen, 339

Virgil, 243

Voltaire, 36, 104, 120, 123, 130,
132, 200-202, 220, 239, 254

Walpole, Horace, 104, 194

Wellington, Duke of, 53

Wilhelm II., German Emperor,
35, 37, 64, 66, 76

Wilkes, 100 ff., 152

Williams, Roger, 181-183

Wilson, President, 28, 32, 33,
65 ff., 76, 77

Windham, William, 206

Winthrop, John, 179

Wordsworth, 171

Young, Arthur, 141, 195

Zaghlul Pasha, 332, 334

Zimmern, A. E., 228

INDEX OF SUBJECTS

- American Revolution, 174, 176 ff., 184
 Aristocracy, 88-93, 266
 Armies, 249
 Athens, communal psychology of, 191, 225-229, 272
 Authority, 228, 276 ff., 283-335, 338
 Best selves, 286 ff.
 Biography, as compared with history, 47
 Bolshevism, 166, 235
 Calvinism, 179
 Capitalism, 310 ff.
 Christianity, 216-239, 259
 Chronicler compared with historian, 48 ff.
 Churches, The, 218, 221, 224, 296, 328
 Civil liberty, 143, 185 ff., 276-281, 339
 Civilization, 52 ff., 253, 270, 282 ff., 289-290
 Classes, 248 ff., 262, 274 ff., 294, 326
 Class war, 312 ff.
 Communal Psychology, 30 ff., 55 ff., 70, 79, 82, 86, 89, 111, 142, 177, 190, 196, 212, 221-223, 239-242, 250, 253, 260, 279, 290, 294, 306, 312, 329
 Communism, 205, 258, 285, 291-292, 334
 Communist Manifesto, The, 159, 212
 Consent of the governed, 336 ff.
 Conservatism, 166, 172
 Co-operative Movement, 215
 Corruption, Effects of, 96 ff.
 Crime, 224 ff.
 Dead Hand, 33 ff., 65, 93, 255 ff., 338
 Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen, 156-158, 175-187, 336
 Declaration of Independence, American, 155, 174-187, 192, 198, 278, 336-337
 Democracy, 28, 32, 76 ff., 86, 114 ff., 143, 154-340
 Divine Right of Kings, 175
 "Doing as one likes", 284 ff.
 Economic democracy, 303 ff.
 Economic effects, 94 ff., 145, 205
 Economic ideas, 80
 Economic liberty, 318-320
 Education, 113, 266
 Eighteenth Century, 82-153, 255
 Equality, 114, 185-187, 187-195, 208, 216, 241, 242-272, 274, 282, 287, 322, 334, 338
 Fascism, 291-292, 334
 Franchise, 210 ff., 337
 Freedom. *See* Liberty
 French Revolution, 36, 59, 69, 78, 79, 82, 105, 125 ff., 170 ff., 174, 178, 184 ff., 243, 328
 Funerals of French kings, 132 ff.
 General will, 336
 God, 224 ff., 292, 330
 Gordon Riots, 102 ff., 270

Happiness and democracy, 185-187, 187-242, 272, 274, 316, 322, 334, 337

Heredity, 265-267

History and the Historian, 42, 43,

Part I. Chapter II., *passim*

History of Persia, by Sir Percy Sykes, 49

House of Commons, 96 ff.

House of Lords, 109 ff., 145

Humanism, 200, 291

Humanitarianism, 200-202, 236, 254, 291

Humphry Clinker, 91

Imperialism, 163-164, 320, 322-335

India, 331-334

Individual as social unit, 252-268, 273-281, 287

Individuality, Consciousness of, 242-252, 273-281, 287, 291, 335, 337

Inheritance as political principle, 88 ff., 116 ff., 142 ff., 163, 175 ff., 212, 262, 275 ff.

Labour, Monopoly power of, 314 ff.

Labour Party, The British, 160

Laissez-faire, 288

Law, 224 ff.

Lear of the Steppes, A, 245

Levellers, The, 179, 181

Leviathan, 230-234

Liberalism, 281 ff.

Liberty, 28, 32, 76 ff., 91, 114, 143, 185-187, 189, 241, 272-335, 338

Lock-outs, 308 ff.

Machine psychology, 328-334

Majority rule, Principle of, 183, 337, 339

Matrix (*see* Civilization), 52 ff., 63, 80, 82, 87, 93, 111, 223, 260

Middle-class, Psychology of, 302 ff.

Mine-owners, Psychology of, 302 ff.

Misery, Effects of, 22, 65

Monarchy, 82-88, 116-118

Nationalism. *See* Nationality, and in particular, 320-322

Nationality, 76 ff., 82 ff., 161 ff., 320-331

Neo-authoritarianism, 290-335

Novel, The, 246-248

"One man, one vote," 216, 267, 339

Othello, 244

Pacifism, 319

Pamela, 146, 246

Patriotism, 292, 295-330, 322 ff.

Philosophes, Les, 123, 130 ff., 138 ff.

Political ideas, 31 ff., 75 ff., 80, 114, 130 ff., 137 ff., 146, 161-164, 176, 242

Political liberty, 143, 185 ff., 276-281, 318

Political power, 92, 95, 111 ff., 142 ff., 197, 276 ff.

Privilege, 88 ff., 111 ff., 116 ff., 142 ff., 163, 175 ff., 185-186, 190 ff., 203, 212 ff., 248-258, 275 ff., 318, 338

Property, 92, 111 ff., 176, 190, 206-216, 250, 258, 301 ff., 314 ff.

Punishment, 225 ff.

Puritanism, 237-239

Reformation, 56 ff., 179

Religion, 216-239, 291, 296, 322, 327 ff.

Rights, Doctrine of, 202 ff., 210-211, 241, 255-258

Riots in eighteenth century, 99 ff.

Robinson Crusoe, 146

Rome, Civilization of, 25

Scale of historical time, 68

Schools, Public, 249

Self-governing Dominions, 324

Servants, Domestic, 195

Seventeenth century, 178

Sin, Doctrine of, 221-239

Slavery, 55, 190

Social Contract, 213-216, 241

Socialism, 38 ff., 204-213, 334

Standardization, 268-272

INDEX

State, The, 268 ff., 280 ff., 300
Strike, General, 298-320
Strikes, 308 ff.
Stupidity, Effects of, 125

Theocracy, 180
Thought, Effects of, 23
Trade Disputes and Trade Union
Act, 307

Trade Unions, 303-320

Utilitarianism, 202-204, 254

War, 297, 309 ff., 319
War of 1914-1918, The, 19-43,
28 ff., 49, 63 ff., 69, 75 ff., 86,
167 ff., 297-298
Women, Position of, 191, 195

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